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Explore History

TRAVEL INTO THE PAST

IN PURSUIT OF ELIZABETH I

11 incredible locations from the life of England's Virgin Queen

PRAGUE

Plan a historical getaway with a 19th-century twist

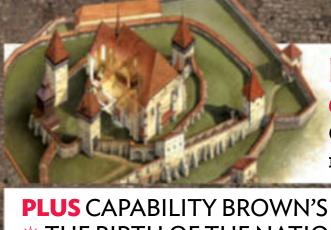
The 35 World Heritage Wonders

Step inside **Beijing's** Forbidden City ✳ Trace Gandhi's fatal footsteps in **India**
Marvel at the grandeur of **Versailles** ✳ Uncover the legacy of **Egypt's** pharaohs
Meet **Pompeii's** stone residents ✳ See the sunrise at **Angkor Wat**

FROM THE CREATORS OF ALL ABOUT HISTORY

Mysteries of Machu Picchu

What Peru's cloud colony can tell us about the Incas



Battle Churches of Transylvania

Go off the beaten track in rural Romania

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ISSUE 001

PLUS CAPABILITY BROWN'S GREATEST GARDENS ✳ WORLD WAR II MUSEUMS IN FRANCE ✳ THE BIRTH OF THE NATIONAL TRUST ✳ CASTLES OF THE HIGHLANDS ✳ **AND MORE...**

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WELCOME to Explore History

Welcome to the very first issue of Explore History, and to a whole new adventure. Making the magazine has been a real pleasure, and we're so glad we can finally share it with you.

We've made the magazine for people who, like us, love taking trips to the places where history comes to life. As much as we enjoy learning about the past, nothing really compares to standing in a spot where the course of history changed (like the revolution sites in our 35 World Heritage Wonders list on page 20), or to happening upon a historical hidden gem (the fortified churches of Transylvania, on page 74, are one such find).

You'll also find practical guides to visiting WWII museums, stately homes and Highland castles in the Mini-Guides section (page 93), and discover how to live the authentic experience of 19th century Prague (page 60). So, grab your map and compass and let's get exploring.

Alex

Alex Hoskins

ISSUE 1

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FIRST WORLD WAR
TITANIC
ANCIENT EGYPT

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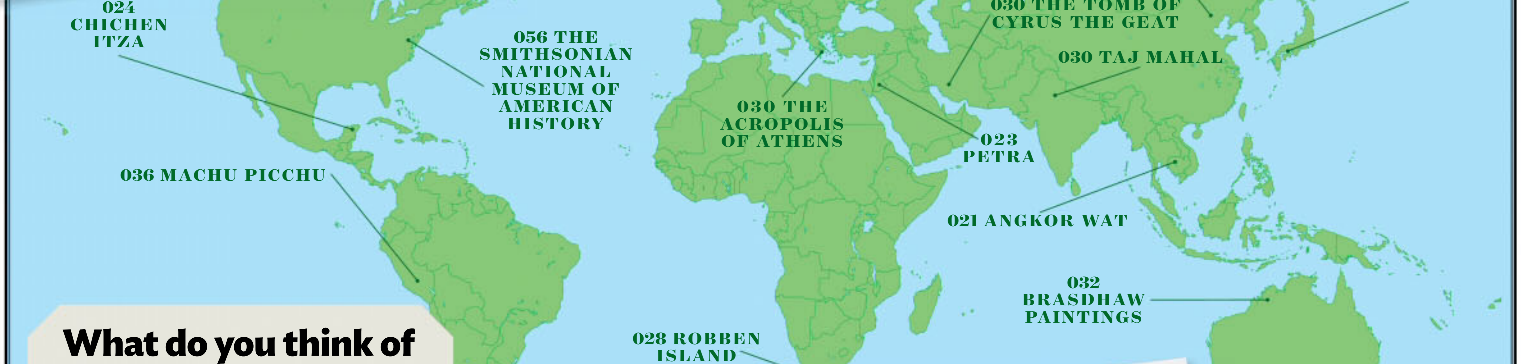
EXPLORE THE ISSUE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What do you think of Explore History?

Turn to page 070 to discover how to join our Reader Panel

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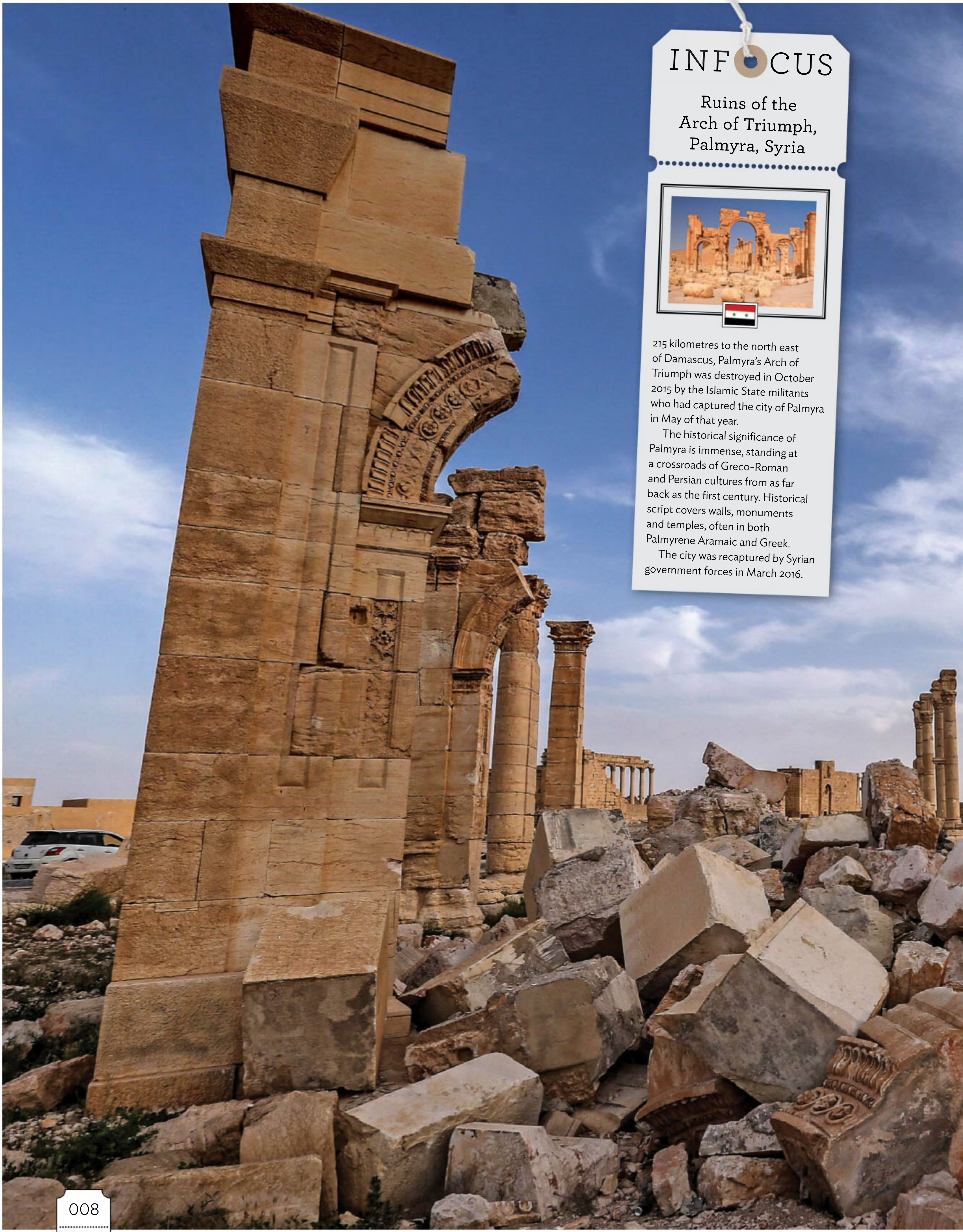
IN FOCUS

Leeds Castle, Kent, England

Built on the site of a royal manor dating back to 857 CE, Leeds Castle has seen many changes. A Medieval keep and barbican were added by Edward I in the 13th century, and Henry VIII made significant changes overseen by his good friend Henry Guildford, including Tudor windows.

The Wykeham Martin family had inherited Leeds Castle by the early 19th century and undertook a survey which found it in need of extensive repairs. Their solution was to demolish the house and rebuild in the Tudor style and as such, most of the castle is just 200 years old.

© Getty



INFOCUS

Ruins of the Arch of Triumph, Palmyra, Syria

215 kilometres to the north east of Damascus, Palmyra's Arch of Triumph was destroyed in October 2015 by the Islamic State militants who had captured the city of Palmyra in May of that year.

The historical significance of Palmyra is immense, standing at a crossroads of Greco-Roman and Persian cultures from as far back as the first century. Historical script covers walls, monuments and temples, often in both Palmyrene Aramaic and Greek.

The city was recaptured by Syrian government forces in March 2016.

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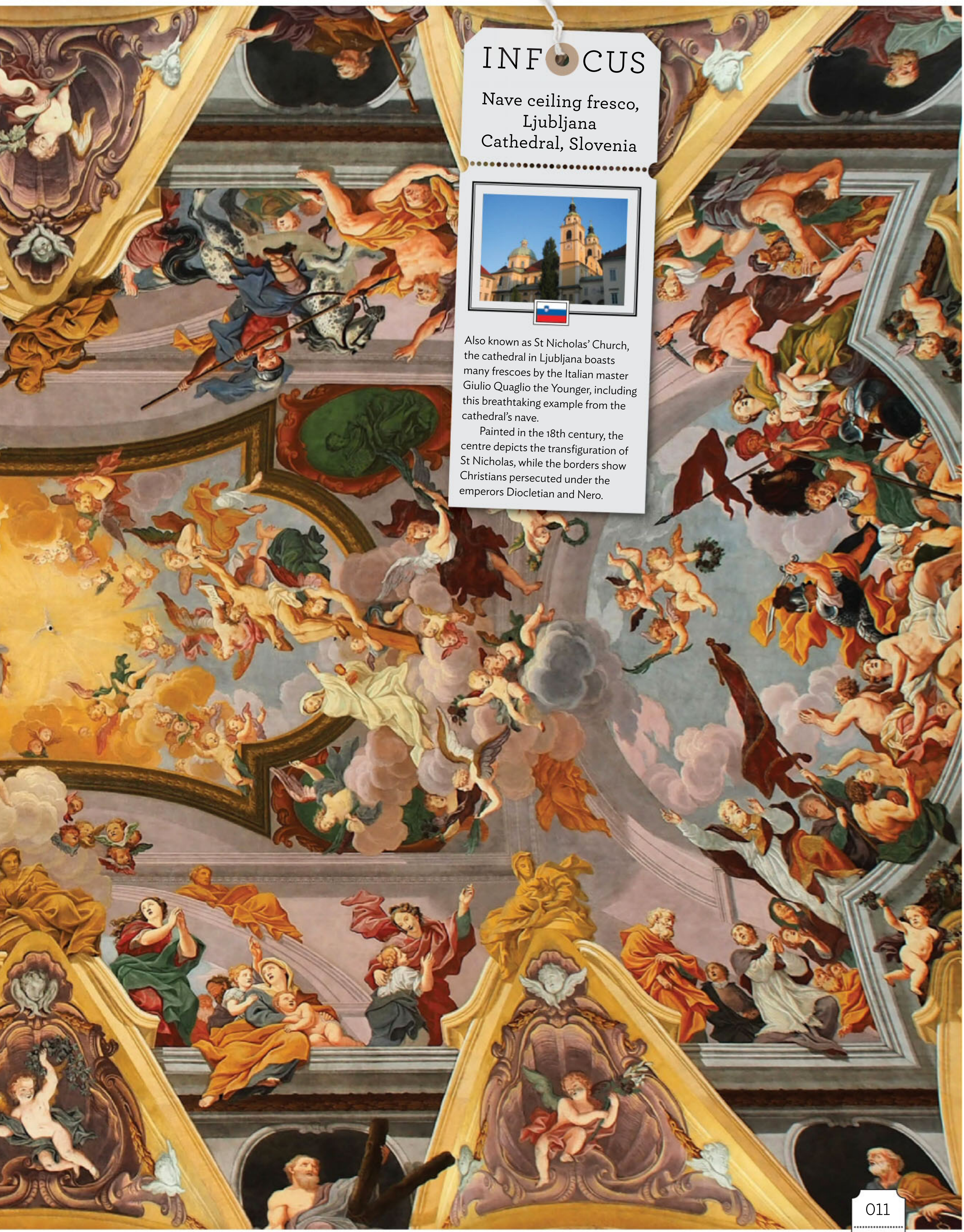
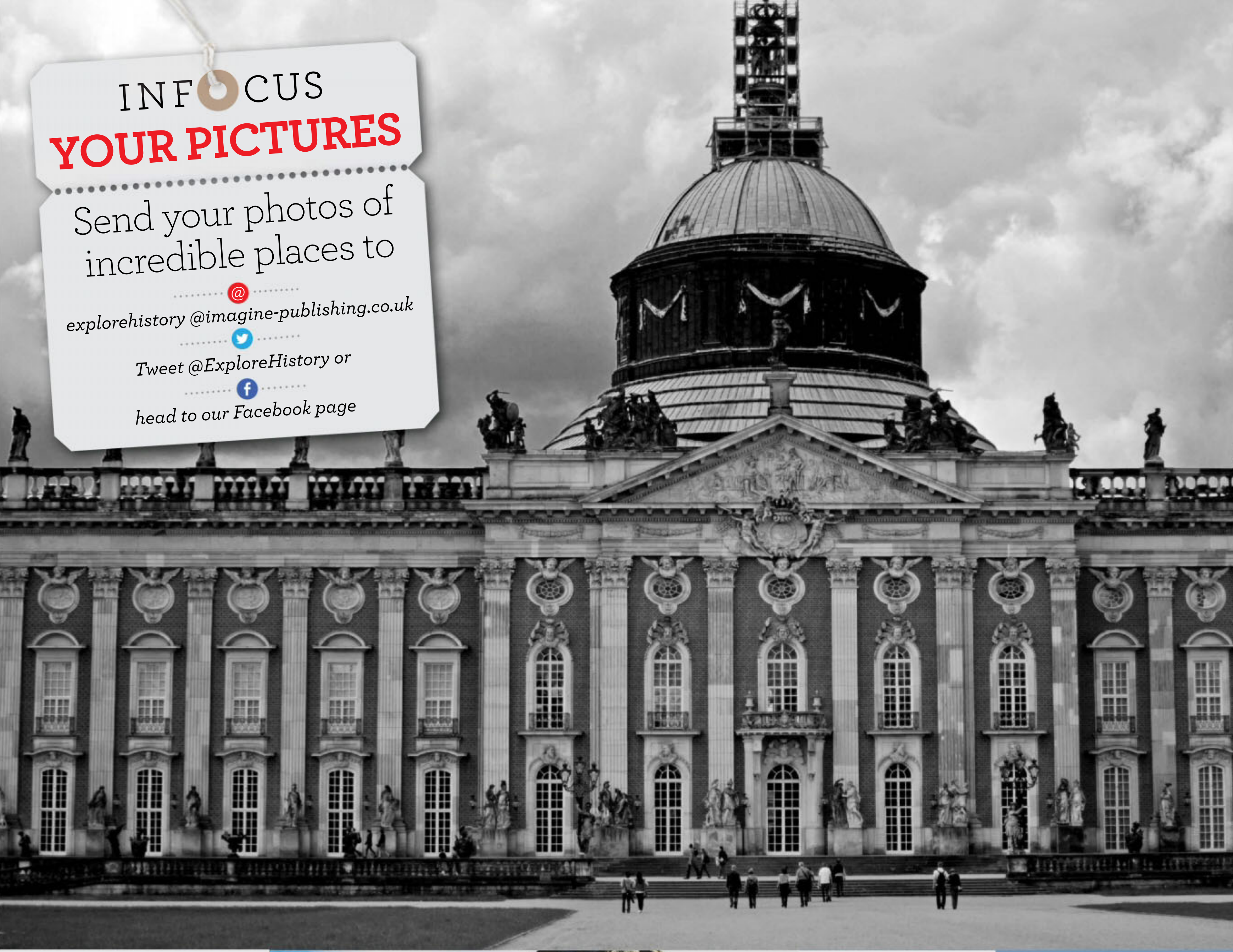


IN FOCUS

Nave ceiling fresco, Ljubljana Cathedral, Slovenia

Also known as St Nicholas' Church, the cathedral in Ljubljana boasts many frescoes by the Italian master Giulio Quaglio the Younger, including this breathtaking example from the cathedral's nave.

Painted in the 18th century, the centre depicts the transfiguration of St Nicholas, while the borders show Christians persecuted under the emperors Diocletian and Nero.



INFOCUS

YOUR PICTURES

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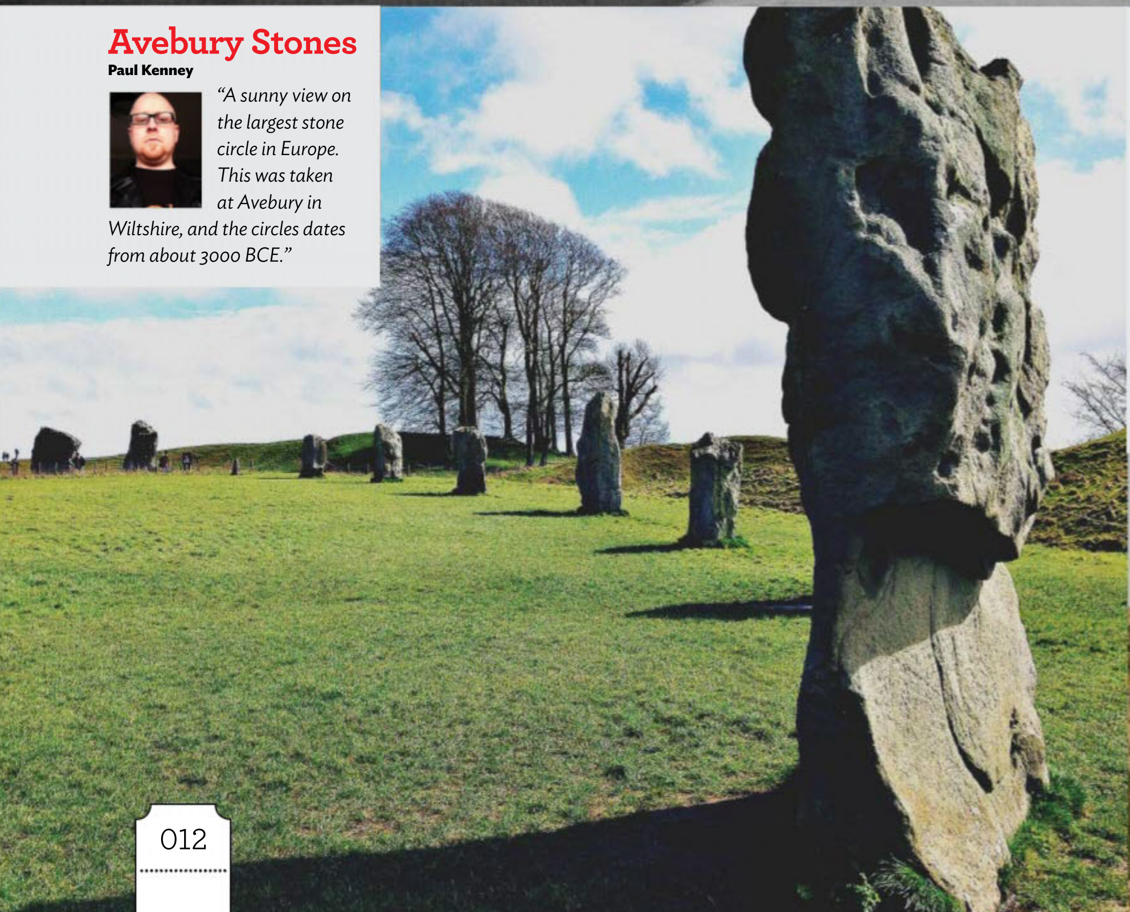
Tweet @ExploreHistory or

head to our Facebook page



Avebury Stones

Paul Kenney

"A sunny view on the largest stone circle in Europe. This was taken at Avebury in Wiltshire, and the circles dates from about 3000 BCE."

Whitby Abbey

Simon Stringfellow

"This pic was taken at Whitby Abbey ruins on a sunny but chilly day in January 2015. It's quite a steep trek up the nearly 200 steps to the abbey but well worth it. There is an eerie and atmospheric feel about the abbey, after all it was part of the inspiration for Bram Stoker's Dracula!"

Sanssouci

Chris Marsland

"I took this picture on a stormy summer day in 2013, visiting Sanssouci, the former palace and grounds of Frederick the Great near Potsdam, Germany. It was a stunning example of faded grandeur and lost times. It is an incredible place to explore and lose yourself in."

Forum of Augustus

Lauren Debono-Elliot

"Rome is bursting with amazing history. There are beautiful sites and ancient ruins everywhere you look, so get lost (on purpose!) – you'll find some hidden gems."

Abu Simbel

Jemmima Knight

"I reached Abu Simbel after an unforgettable sunrise bus-ride through the Sahara desert. In the blazing heat stand four statues of Ramses II that flank the entrance to the magnificent Big Temple."

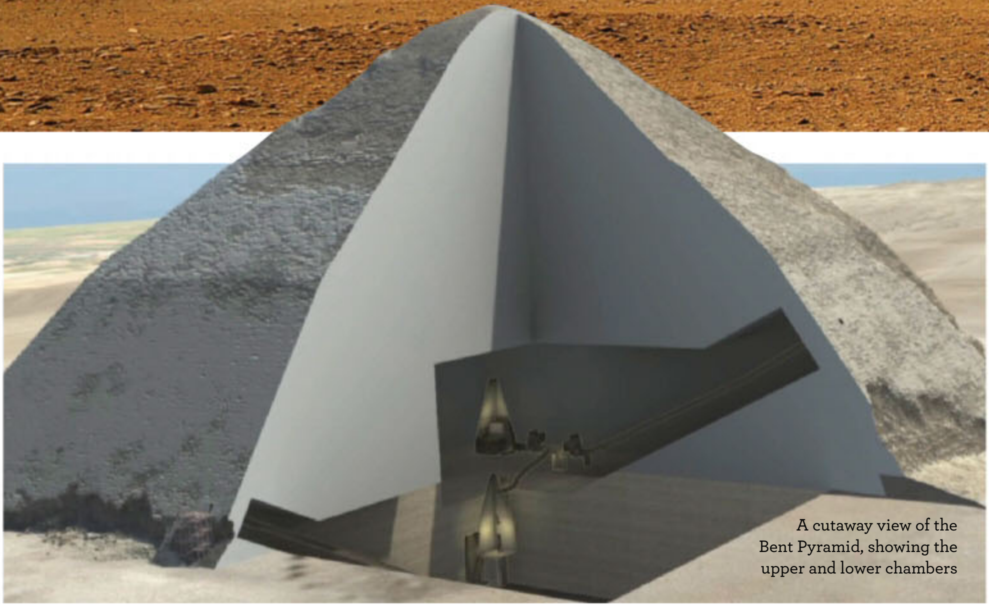
DISCOVERIES

UNEARTHING THE LATEST ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS, BIG EVENTS & MORE

REVEALED:

The hidden chambers of the pyramids

New technology opens up the 4,615-year-old Bent Pyramid using cosmic particles… and the Great Pyramid of Giza will be next!



A cutaway view of the Bent Pyramid, showing the upper and lower chambers

Known as the Southern Shining Pyramid when it was built by the pharaoh Sneferu in about the year 2600 BCE, the innovative new ScanPyramids project has revealed the hidden second chamber of Bent Pyramid, which is located in the Dahshur necropolis 25 miles from Cairo, for the very first time.

A totally non-invasive process that poses no risk to these ancient monuments, ScanPyramids uses muons to create a three-dimensional map of the structure that measures everything from the thickness of

Scientists set up muon emulsion films in the lower chamber of the pyramid

Muon emulsion films are then compared in the laboratory to form the image of the inside of the pyramid

the stonework to the existence of unopened chambers and passages. Muons are cosmic particles that naturally rain down from the Earth's atmosphere and are either absorbed or deflected by hard surfaces, and over the last 4,615 years they have travelled deeper and deeper into the pyramid.

By laying down 40 muon-sensitive plates in Bent Pyramid's lower chamber, ScanPyramids was able to take a 'photograph' showing the concentration levels of muons in the structure. This new information revealed a smaller second chamber located 18 metres above the lower chamber.

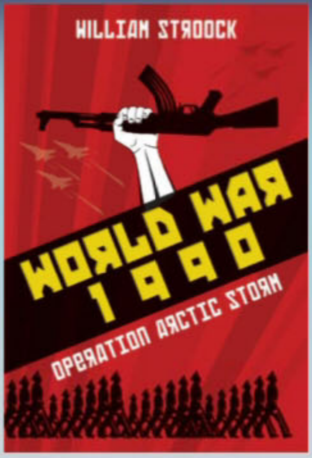
The project, which is run by Cairo University's Faculty of Engineering and the Paris-based HIP Institute under the authority of the Egyptian Ministry of Antiquities, also uses infrared thermography as well as lasers to complete their uniquely detailed survey of the ancient monument.

Archaeologists have long believed that Bent Pyramid (so called because the top section is built at a different angle to the bottom section) is an example of the transition from the designs of step pyramids to smooth-sided pyramids, and the ScanPyramids project offers up vital clues about the ways in which these incredible structures were constructed.

While the scan of Bent Pyramid has dashed hopes that Sneferu himself was interred in a larger chamber deeper into the complex (the new second chamber is far too small to be used as a burial chamber), three more pyramids – the Great Pyramid of Giza, Pyramid of Khafre, and the nearby Red Pyramid – are the next targets for scans, and the Great Pyramid has long been rumoured to contain hidden passageways, chambers and perhaps even the burial place of the pyramid's enigmatic patron: the Pharaoh Khufu.

© Egyptian Ministry of Antiquities, HIP Institute and the Faculty of Engineering (Cairo University)

In A Different 1990...



- In West Germany, NATO will win the greatest tank battle in history
- In London, Prime Minister Thatcher will urge the continuation of the war
- In Alaska, Americans will defend their homes against Soviet invaders
- In the North Sea, the United States and Royal Navies will begin the campaign to liberate Norway
- It's World War Three: Operation Arctic Storm

WORLD WAR 1990

Operation Arctic Storm

By William Stroock

Available at amazon

1

3

2

4

4 Things To Do At Chalke Valley History Festival

It's not just talks in tents (not that there's anything wrong with that), so make sure you catch this year's living history highlights

1 WATCH WWII WAR BIRDS

Whether you're an aviation nut or not, you can't fail to be moved by the sight of the mighty Avro Lancaster, or the Battle of Britain's iconic Supermarine Spitfire and Hawker Hurricane, roaring overhead. The airshow is a CVHF favourite – miss it at your peril.

2 WALK A WWI TRENCH

Reflect on experiences of the Great War with this 70 square foot recreation of a World War I trench, built using authentic materials and period references. As 1 July commemorates the 100th anniversary of the first day of the Battle of the Somme, the Bishop of Salisbury will lead a service at the site from 7.15am.

3 FIGHT LIKE A VIKING

More than 100 re-enactors will rattle their chainmail in an epic recreation of the Battle of Ethandun - Alfred the Great's titanic clash with the Vikings. Sticking with the theme, there will be demonstrations of a shieldwall in action, Viking combat, an Anglo-Saxon village and an unmissable Viking longboat.

4 PARTY LIKE IT'S 1941

Break out your pre-war finery and dance like it might be your last in the Blitz Ball from 7pm on Saturday 2 July. Music comes from the Bombshell Belles, the London Swing Orchestra and the D-Day Darlings, and there will be a Blitz-inspired supper too, but don't expect rationing-level portions.

Chalke Valley History Festival is held 27 June – 3 July in Wiltshire. Find out more at cvhf.org.uk

MORE EVENTS AROUND THE WORLD

✴ **Jornadas Medievales, 18 – 19 June:** The village of Briones in Rioja, Spain, transforms to re-enact 14th-century life for one weekend a year.

✴ **Luther's Wedding Festival, 10 – 12 June:** Lutherstadt Wittenburg, in Germany, is a three-day celebration of Martin Luther and Katharina von Bora's marriage in 1525.

✴ **Inti Raymi, 24 June:** The Festival of the Sun is a yearly event in Cusco, Peru, with street dances and parades honouring the Sun god, Inti.

✴ **Hay Festival, 26 May – 5 June:** The cultural festival taking place in Hay-on-Wye, Wales, includes talks on history, art and adventure (among many other subjects).

© Thinkstock, Chalk Valley History Festival

EXPLORER'S KNAPSACK

What do you need to make sure your next expedition goes smoothly? Here's a selection of the latest accessories for your knapsack

MAPPING THE AIRWAYS
BRITISH AIRWAYS
spot
GEN3

Mapping The Airways

This book by Paul Jarvis is a beautiful compendium of maps and imagery from the British Airways archives. Full-colour retro posters and 20th-century travel maps make this a comforting nostalgia trip, perfect for poring over on the tray-table during your next flight.

Price: £17.99 /$28.50

Logitech UE Megaboom Speaker

When hiking, camping or enjoying a day out, you need a portable speaker that can keep up. The UE Megaboom is shockproof, waterproof and mud-proof, and operates through a handy wireless Bluetooth connection.

Price: £169.99 /$299.99

Timera App

Timera is an innovative app that helps you see history everywhere using your smartphone. First, you pick an image from its bank of old photos, then you hold the image in front of its modern counterpart, and blend.

Price: Free (iOS and Android)

Ventura PB60 Portable Power

Perfect for keeping smartphones and tablets going on long hikes, the shockproof Ventura PB60 power pack is made for the outdoors. With 10,400 mAh battery capacity, it can charge most smartphones eight times, and tablets up to five times.

Price: £39.99/$57

SPOT Gen3 Satellite GPS Messenger

This rugged GPS lets people know you're safe when on your travels (and beyond mobile service range). It can send location information at intervals from 2.5 to 60 minutes, and send an SOS at the push of a button.

Price: £159.95 /$169.99

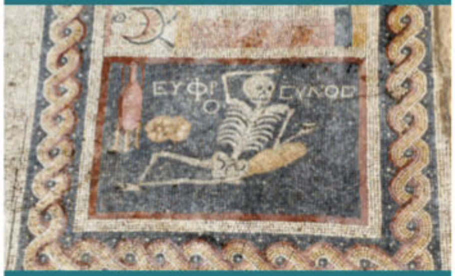
DIG ISSUES

Malcolm X house finds

Excavations at a former home of Malcolm X have discovered artefacts from the 18th century, suggesting that another dwelling on the same site preceded the current 19th century building. Broken pottery, records and jewellery may remain from the house being vandalised in the 1970s.

Roman villa in the garden

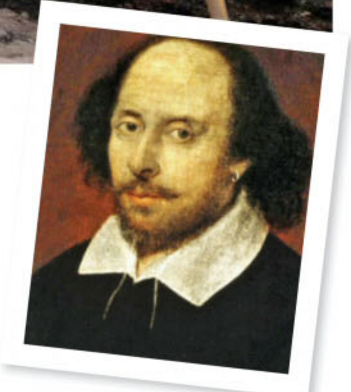
Luke Irwin was startled to find the surprisingly well-preserved remains of a Roman villa while laying wiring out to an old barn at his home in Wiltshire. Historic England archaeologist, Dr David Roberts, has hailed the discovery as "a hugely valuable site in terms of research, with incredible potential."



Be cheerful, enjoy life

Archaeologists in Turkey have uncovered a mosaic from the 3rd century BCE. The ancient Greek design shows a skeleton enjoying a loaf of bread and pitcher of wine, and bears a slogan roughly translated as 'be cheerful, enjoy your life'. The mosaic would have adorned the floor of a dining room.

© Getty



Uncovering Shakespeare's lost theatre

500 years after his death, we may finally know the details of one of Shakespeare's earliest theatres

Shakespeare's plays were performed at several playhouses in London, though the reconstructed Globe is certainly the one most people associate with the Bard. But the remains of one of the least-documented of these theatres, the Curtain, are being examined anew following the celebrations marking 500 years since Shakespeare's death in April this year. The Curtain, though sparsely documented, is of great importance, particularly as it was the first theatre to stage *Romeo and Juliet* and *Henry V*.

Located in Shoreditch, the site is expected to yield well-preserved artefacts and remains. As one of Shakespeare's earliest theatres (it opened in 1577), this is a rare opportunity for archaeologists to discover more about the physical structure, the cultural profile of the area in the 16th and 17th century, and how performances took place in this period. The archaeologists will be looking out for evidence of the stage, the backstage area and the yard.

Heather Knight, senior archaeologist leading the dig, said; "We hope to find out more about the structure of the theatre – where *Henry V* was first performed – which will give us a clearer indication of how Elizabethan playhouses were used and the evolution of theatre.

"There is also the possibility of finding fragments of props, costumes or items used by the audience, including food remains or drinking vessels, which could tell us more about theatre productions and culture at the time. We look forward to sharing our findings."

The Curtain remains were first found in 2012 by the Museum of London Archaeology (MoLA). Its precise location had been thought lost following the dismantling of the theatre in the 17th century.

ABOVE The Curtain could contain vital information about theatre and culture in the 16th and 17th century

My favourite places
Dan Jones

We spoke to castle fanatic, author and presenter Dan Jones about his favourite historic places, inspiring museums and unsung sites

CLIFFORD'S TOWER

The last castle I visited was Clifford's Tower in York. It's what remains of what was once a very large castle, the keep of the castle so it's on top of a large mound. Inside it's pretty much just a shell. It's a beautiful-looking oddity in York – which is one of my favourite cities in the UK.

DOVER CASTLE

Choosing a favourite castle is very difficult – I'm going to annoy a lot of castles by picking just one! But I've got a very soft spot for Dover Castle. A lot of castles' stories close with the Civil War, but in Dover you also have Napoleonic tunnels and a Cold War bunker. Historically, it's richer than virtually any castle I know.

V&A

I took a stroll around the V&A recently, as I live in London, not too far from the V&A. That whole area of Victorian London retains the feeling of genuine pride in cultural inheritance. Three or four years ago, they opened some Medieval Renaissance galleries that I never get tired of wandering around. You always find something new!

NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

I do like visiting the V&A if I'm on my own, but my kids refuse to go there. They want to go to the Natural History Museum next door, with the dinosaurs inside! That's got to be my favourite museum at the moment because it's the one that keeps them quietest – and it's also a very good museum.

DUBROVNIK

I'm a big fan of Dubrovnik, and not just because it doubles as King's Landing in *Game of Thrones*. Even after being shelled during the [Yugoslavian] civil war, 20 years ago, it is extraordinary, jutting out into the Adriatic with magnificent medieval walls and red tile roofs.

LOUISVILLE

Louisville, Kentucky – nobody's been there, but it's an extraordinary place. Not only is it the birthplace of the Louisville Slugger, the most famous baseball bat in sporting history, but it's also the hometown of Muhammed Ali. I'm a big sports fan, and Louisville has a rich sporting history.

> "That whole area of Victorian London retains the feeling of genuine pride in cultural inheritance"

BBC
HENRY VIII
AND HIS SIX WIVES

Henry VIII and his Six Wives, a four-part TV series presented by Dan Jones and Suzannah Lipscomb, is available on DVD from 6 June

© Thinkstock

35

WORLD HERITAGE WONDERS

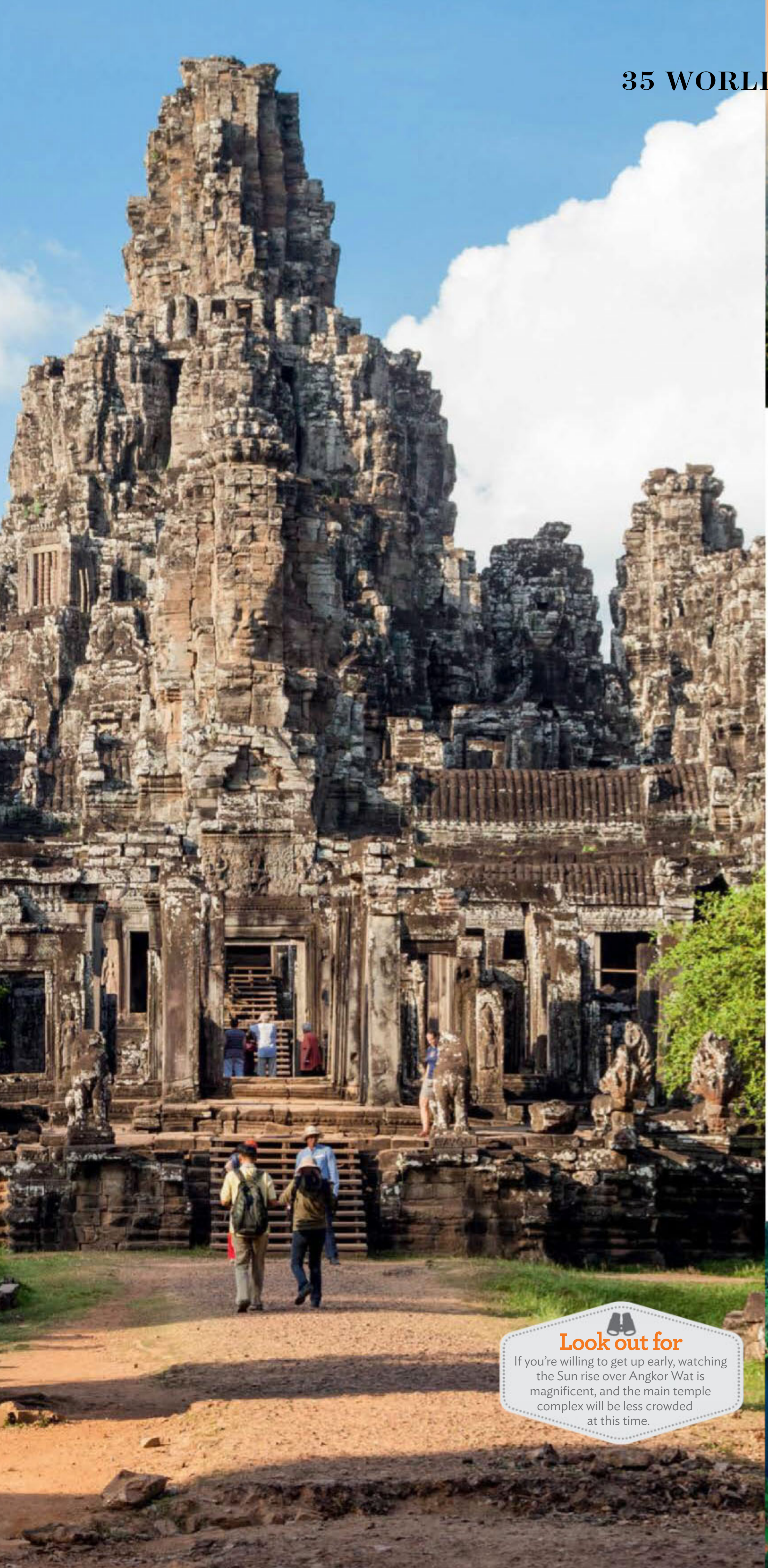
YOU NEED TO DISCOVER

Follow this guide to exploring some of the most astonishing, beautiful and awe-inspiring historical sights the world has to offer

WORDS BY FRANCES WHITE

Often history is dismissed as something that belongs to the past, to old dusty libraries and dog-eared books. However, across the globe there are a plethora of historical sites that still boast as much splendour and importance today as the day they were built. These heritage sites are not just a shadow of the past, but a living, breathing part of the present, and the closest we can come to experiencing the people, places and civilisations that came before us.

Journey through the Forbidden City in Beijing, an enclosed world ruled by a man who could take your life for entering uninvited, or follow the narrow streets of Old Jerusalem, a city that has flourished through centuries of war, struggle and rebellion. From the towering Pyramids of Giza to the small, unassuming business house of the Birla family in India, where a man who fought for a nation's freedom breathed his last, the sites in this guide have shaped who were are, not only as cultures of people, but as an entire human race.



Angkor Wat

Explore 400 square kilometres of temples, monuments and scenery

✳ Siem Reap, Cambodia

One of the most important and outstanding archeological sites in Southeast Asia, Angkor Wat spans an impressive 400 square kilometres. The complex comprises the spectacular remains of the capitals of the Khmer Empire, including the Temple of Angkor Wat and the Bayon Temple. The largest religious monument in the world, Angkor Wat is far more than a ruin of the past, and even today it is inhabited and remains an important religious centre.

Originally built by Suryavarman II in the early 12th century as a symbol to the Hindu faith, the god-kings that followed all endeavoured to create increasingly impressive structures. This has resulted in an awe-inspiring temple complex, with depth and detail so astonishing it must be witnessed to be appreciated. The most striking aspect of Angkor Wat is undoubtedly its vast size and monumental grandeur, but the smaller, more intricate details, such as the 3,000 uniquely carved nymphs, are perhaps the most amazing of all.

© AWL; Thinkstock; Alamy

Look out for

If you're willing to get up early, watching the Sun rise over Angkor Wat is magnificent, and the main temple complex will be less crowded at this time.

Blenheim Palace

Step inside one England's most opulent buildings

BELOW Take a tour around the intricately decorated rooms of Blenheim Palace

Oxfordshire, England

Nestled in the heart of Woodstock, Oxfordshire, Blenheim Palace was built in the early 18th century to celebrate the British victory over the French. Since then it has been the principal residence of the dukes of Marlborough, and served as the birthplace of British prime minister Winston Churchill. A stunning example of 18th-century baroque architecture, Blenheim Palace is set in 2,000 acres of parkland and gardens. Every room inside the building is an awe-inspiring journey, from the Palace State rooms with their detailed tapestries to the private apartments, where the family have lived for generations.

BELOW Consuelo Vanderbilt and Winston Churchill at Blenheim Palace in 1902

ABOVE The lake in front of the house is the perfect place to enjoy a relaxed picnic on warmer days

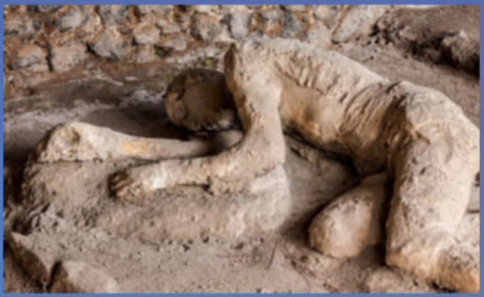
LEFT The stately clock tower looks out over the east courtyard, bringing you back to the present among the ample history

RIGHT The vast saloon with its dramatic ceiling fresco, trompe l'oeil painted walls and marble doorways is a breathtaking sight

Pompeii

✳ **Campania, Italy**

In 79 CE, Pompeii was a prosperous Roman town with 11,000 inhabitants, an advanced water system and a bustling port. However, that year an eruption from Mount Vesuvius buried the city under mountains of ash, where it lay for 1,500 years. When it was rediscovered, archaeologists found a perfectly preserved Roman city. For 250 years tourists have flocked to the ruins to glimpse a snapshot of the past. From the reconstructed gardens and breathtaking piazza to the bath buildings and amphitheatre, Pompeii offers a unique insight into what life was like during Pax Romana.



Forbidden City

✳ **Beijing, China**

For almost 500 years, the Forbidden City served as the home of the emperors of China. A complex of 980 buildings, it was a place of secrecy, power and eternal opulence. Today it is hailed as the largest collection of preserved ancient wooden structures on the globe and is surrounded by a ten-metre-high wall with a unique, delicately crafted watchtower at every corner. With almost 10,000 rooms containing countless works of art, beautifully preserved furniture and priceless relics of the past, every inch of the Forbidden City is dripping in rich history and centuries of Chinese heritage.

Volubilis

✳ **Fès-Meknès, Morocco**

Nestled between Fez and Rabat, the city of Volubilis was the ancient capital of the kingdom of Mauritania. Originally an Amazigh settlement, Volubilis fell under Roman rule and was expanded with many typically Roman features, including a temple, basilica and town houses. Today the ruins are a testament to the Romanisation of rural areas, and the effect on indigenous people. With its carved stonework, mosaic tiles and triumphant archways, Volubilis is one of the finest Roman sites in North Africa.

Petra

The land of Indiana Jones has much history to offer

✳ **Ma'an Governorate, Jordan**

Half carved into the red-rose rock, Petra is a vast, unique city that served as a key junction for Indian incense, Chinese silk and other trade between Arabia, Egypt and Syria-Phoenicia more than 2,000 years ago. The jewel in Jordan's crown, Petra is surrounded by sheer mountains, housing a labyrinth of passages and gorges. Petra's position as one of the 'New7Wonders' Seven Wonders of the World is well deserved. It houses hundreds of intricately cut rock tombs with elaborate carvings, a huge 3,000-capacity theatre and Al-Madbah – a high religious place of sacrifice seated on the summit of Jabal Madbah. Above, overlooking it all is Ad-Deir monastery, reached by ascending 800 steps cut into the rock. Exploring every inch of Petra will take days, but it is a simply awe-inspiring experience and true testament to the combined powers of nature and man.

> "Exploring every inch of Petra will take days"

ABOVE Petra suffered severe damage in 363 when two earthquakes destroyed half of the city

Petra's treasury building lit beautifully at night

© Thinkstock; Blenheim Palace; Pixelflake

ABOVE A Mayan warrior re-enactor pictured at Yucatán

LEFT The Templo de los Guerreros, or Temple of the Warriors, another of the incredible mammoth structures at Chichen Itza

Chichen Itza

A striking set of ruins harking back to a mysterious civilisation

✳ **Yucatán, Mexico**

Once the centre of the Maya Empire in Central America, the ruins of Chichen Itza offer a unique and dazzling insight into a rich, diverse and often mystifying civilisation. Chichen Itza is a huge archaeological complex, comprising towering pyramids, chilling temples and the largest ball court in America, where men literally played for their lives. The most iconic landmark of Chichen Itza is undoubtedly the dazzling pyramid of El Castillo, standing a towering 24 metres high, with its 365 stone steps, one for each day of the year.

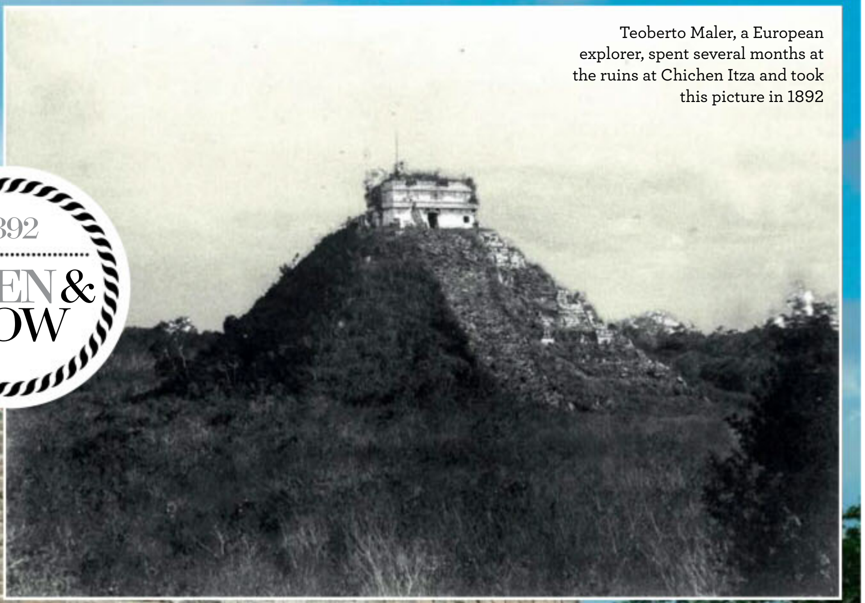
ABOVE This stone ring was used as a hoop for the game of pelota, situated in the huge ball court at Chichen Itza

RIGHT The grand ball court as seen from above, where its immense scale can be felt

> “The largest ball court in America, where men literally played for their lives”

1892

THEN & NOW



Teoberto Maler, a European explorer, spent several months at the ruins at Chichen Itza and took this picture in 1892

Alhambra

✳ Granada, Spain

The Alhambra sits nestled on the al-Sabika hill overlooking Granada, Spain. Named after the reddish hue of its walls, the building originally served as a small fortress until it was renovated into a royal palace. In 1492, it was used as the royal court of Ferdinand and Isabella, and today this complex of buildings is a cornucopia of Christian and Muslim art working in unison to create one of the most breathtaking structures in Europe.

Rock-hewn churches

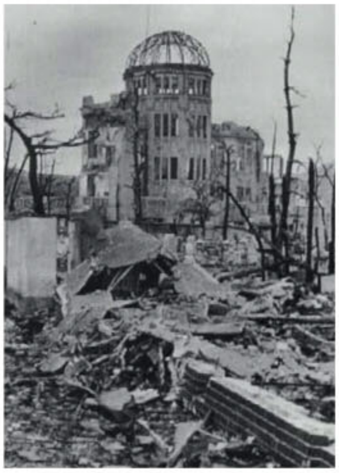
✳ Lalibela, Ethiopia

In the 12th century, Ethiopian ruler King Lalibela set out to construct a ‘New Jerusalem’ in the heart of Ethiopia. These grand, towering churches were carved from within the earth from the ‘living rock’ of monolithic blocks. The structures of the churches were painstakingly chiselled out and then details like windows, doors and rooms added. An impressive drainage system was implemented, linking all the buildings with water that filled the church wells. Today, ten of these churches stand in two main groups, in the north and east, while the 11th church, the finest example and most preserved, stands isolated in the west. This unique site is said to have been carved by angels at night, but any visitor will be awed by the man-made details, mural paintings, intricate carvings and reliefs that survive inside these red stone structures.

© Thinkstock

Atomic Bomb Dome

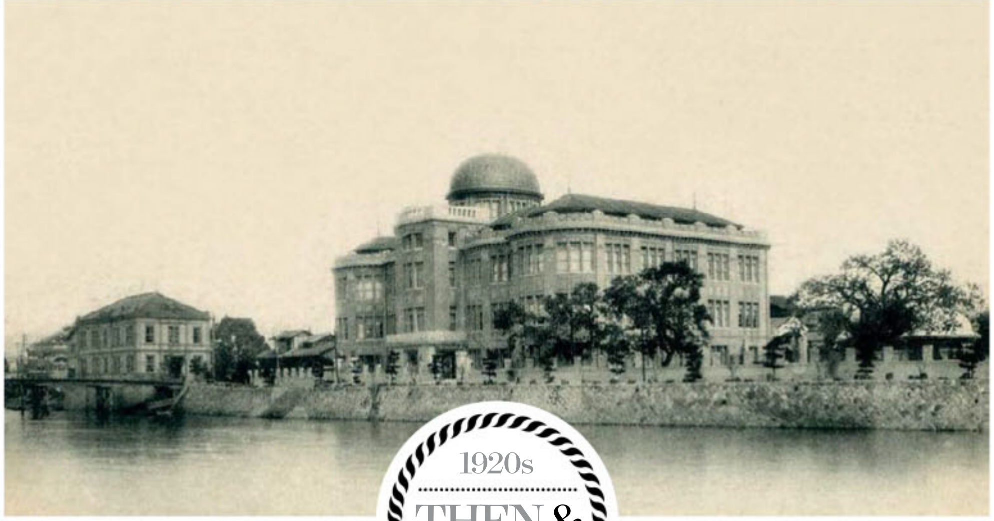
Left unrestored after the bomb, the dome pays tribute to Hiroshima's past

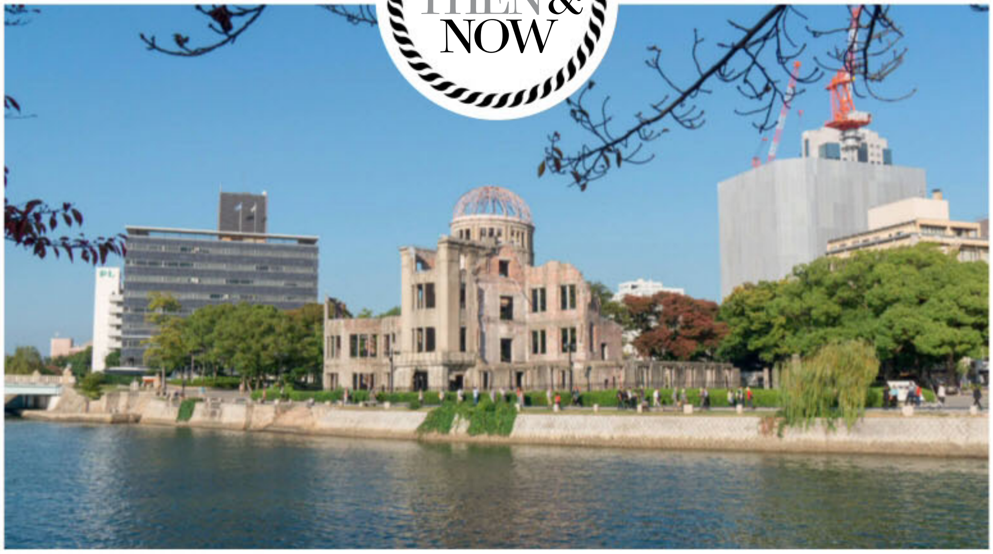


✳ Hiroshima, Japan

Also known as the Hiroshima Peace Memorial, the Atomic Bomb Dome is a ruin that serves as a tribute to the hundreds of thousands of people who lost their lives in the World War II atomic bombing of the city. Originally created as an exhibition hall, the building was the only one left standing in the area after the attack. It has been carefully preserved in the same condition as immediately after the bombing, and today is a stark reminder of the destruction caused by man, but also of enduring hope for world peace.

LEFT The dome, known then as the Genbaku Dome, pictured in 1945, amid the devastation caused by the bomb





> "A tribute to the hundreds of thousands of people who lost their life in the World War II atomic bombing of the city"

✳

Look out for

The larger beehive oratory next to the cemetery has a white quartz cross set above the door. A rare embellishment on an island of such austere beauty.

Jerusalem's Old City

✳ Jerusalem, Israel

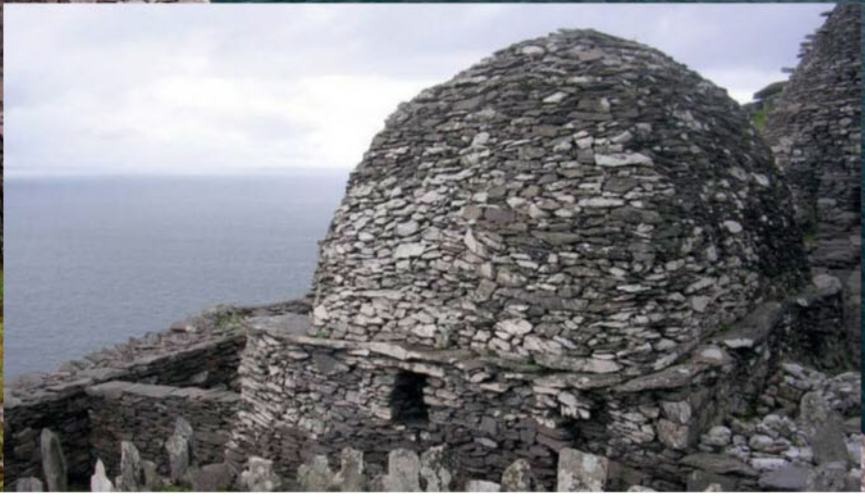
If there was ever a place in the world where visitors can not only observe history but feel fully immersed in it, Jerusalem's Old City is it. Surrounded by massive 16th-century Ottoman walls, the Old City is the beating heart of Jerusalem. The city is divided into four culturally unique areas – the Muslim Quarter, Jewish Quarter, Armenian Quarter and Christian Quarter. Although it has a history stretching back some 3,000 years, the Old City is not a monument, it is a living, breathing place inhabited to this day. A winding maze of narrow streets, ancient buildings and colourful markets, to walk the cobblestones is to take a journey through a city that has experienced war, loss, destruction but also hope and redemption on a monumental scale.

Skellig Michael

A breathtaking Medieval site with wildlife to match

✳ **Kerry, Ireland**

Almost 12 kilometres west of County Kerry is a collection of sea crags and ancient rocks, 350 million years old, that rise out of the depths of the Atlantic Ocean. These spectacular pinnacles were the chosen retreat of a small group of monks who, between the 6th and 8th century, withdrew from civilisation to become closer to God. The monastery these early Christians established on the island, now known as Skellig Michael, has survived, and consists of six beehive cells, two oratories and a later Medieval church. Although extreme weather prompted the monks to abandon the island in the 12th or 13th century, it has remained a place of pilgrimage, and featured in the film *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*.



Po Lin Monastery

✳ **Lantau Island, Hong Kong**

Once known as the 'Big Thatched Hut', Po Lin Monastery began life in 1906 when three monks set up a monastery for practice in the calm, mountain scenery of Mount Muk Yue. Today, this remote site is a tourist hot spot in Hong Kong, with its outstanding Tian Tan Buddha, completed in 1993. This towering masterpiece of craftsmanship is 34 metres high and a glimmering bronze beacon looking out over mainland China. By climbing the 268 steps, visitors can observe this incredible statue up close, and take in the stunning mountain and sea views from the base.

BELOW The huge Buddha presides over tourists making a visit to the impressive site on Lantau Island

Chatsworth House

✳ **Derbyshire, England**

Seated on the bank of the river Derwent, Chatsworth House is a sublime yellow-stoned stately home set among luscious green parkland and expansive hills. The current house was built in 1553 by Bess of Hardwick and was visited several times by Mary, Queen of Scots. In the 17th century, the building underwent further renovation and today houses one of the most impressive art collections in Europe, spanning 4,000 years. From the sculpture gallery to the awe-inspiring painted hall, Chatsworth House is one of the most impressive and historically rich country houses in the United Kingdom.

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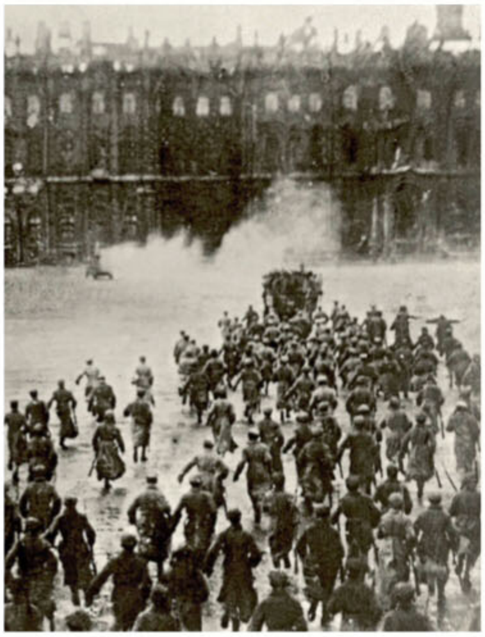
SITES OF REVOLUTION



ABOVE An iconic image from the October Revolution, showing the storming of the Winter Palace

The Winter Palace

Best known for the storming of the palace during the October Revolution, the building has become one of Russia's most iconic landmarks

✳ **Saint Petersburg, Russia**

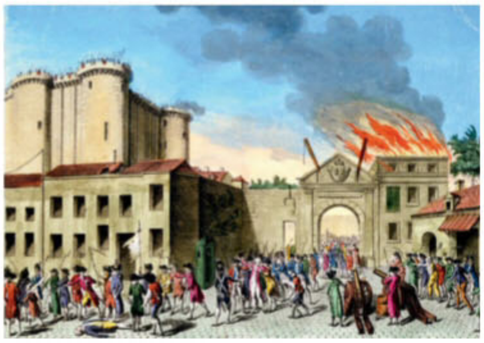
Magnificent, imposing and dominating, few other buildings in the world are so intrinsically linked to the fate and history of a nation than the Winter Palace in Saint Petersburg, Russia. The palace as it stands today is the fourth incarnation and served as the official residence of the Russian monarchs from 1732 to 1917. Perhaps most known for the storming of the palace during the October Revolution in 1917, the building has become one of Russia's most iconic landmarks.

This baroque-style palace is just as impressive inside as out. Within the three-storey green-and-white building are 1,057 different halls and rooms, many of which are open to visitors. From the magnificent gala staircase with its red-velvet carpet to the countless halls intricately decorated with gleaming gold sculptures, not forgetting the paintings that stretch across entire ceilings, the palace oozes centuries of decadence and splendour. With spectacular views across the river, taking a walk through the state rooms will truly transport you back to the reign of the tsars.

Bastille

✳ **Paris, France**

The site of one of the most significant events in European history, in 1789, during the French Revolution, the Bastille Prison was stormed and became an icon of the French republican movement. Due to this destruction, little remains of the original Bastille today, however, some relics do survive. Remaining stones can be seen on Boulevard Henri IV and in the nearby Métro station, while the Carnavalet Museum is home to several precious relics. The square is also occupied by the famous July Column, which marks a more recent revolution - that of 1830.



ABOVE An illustration of the storming of the Bastille, in Paris, which took place in 1789

Gettysburg

✳ **Pennsylvania, USA**

Often referred to as the "High Water Mark of the Rebellion", the Battle of Gettysburg was the turning point of the American Civil War, seeing the Union put a stop to the confederate invasion of the north. You can now tour the site of this historic battle, home to over 1,000 monuments and representing one of the largest collections of outdoor sculpture in the world. First, discover the story of the Civil War at the National Park Service museum, then take a trip to the David Wills House, where Lincoln finished his Gettysburg address. This is the perfect place to learn more about the American Civil War.

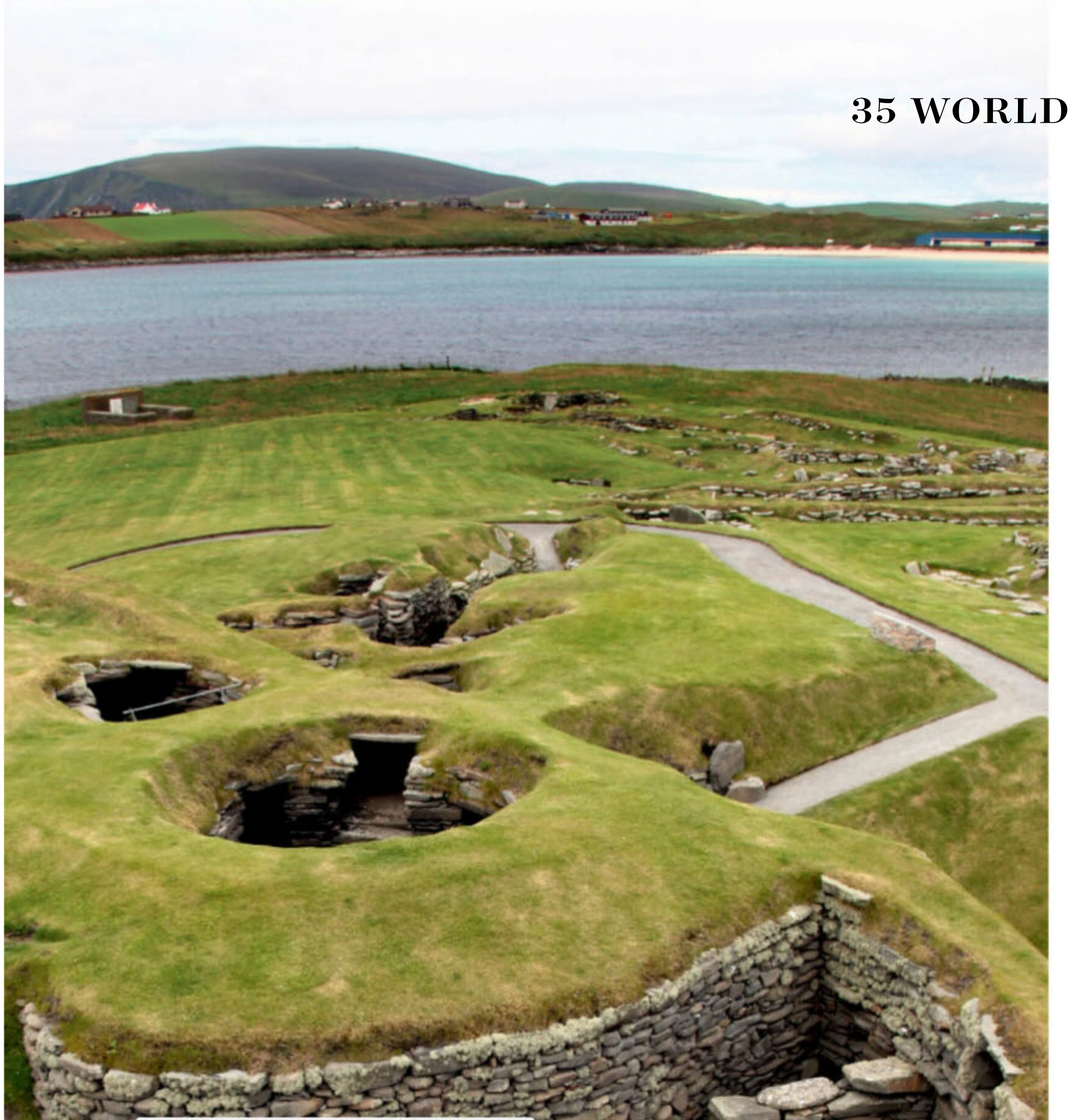
ABOVE A poignant shot of the devastation following the battle at Gettysburg in July 1863

Robben Island

✳ **Cape Town, South Africa**

Located in Table Bay just off the coast of Bloubergstand, Cape Town, Robben Island is best known as the place where Nelson Mandela served 18 years of his 27 years' imprisonment. Current president Jacob Zuma and ex-president Kgalema Motlanthe were also inmates. Today, the island is a popular tourist attraction, with tours led by former prisoners. While exploring, you can glimpse the block where Mandela was held, giving insight into the life of the inmates there during the battle to end apartheid. As well as being a sobering but inspiring trip, the island is also home to a vast array of wildlife.

ABOVE Nelson Mandela takes Bill Clinton on a visit to the cell he lived in at Robben Island

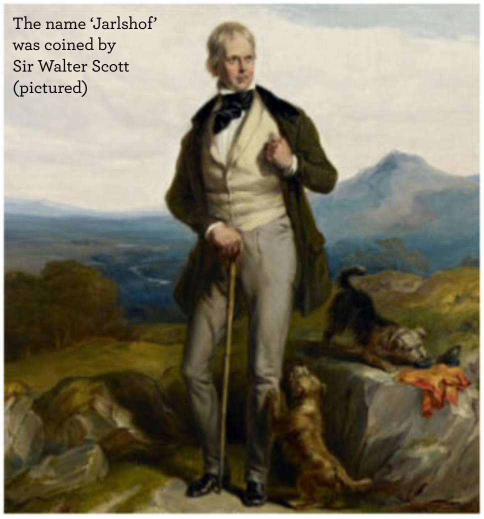


Jarlshof

Beauty and the Bronze Age

✳ Shetland Islands, Scotland

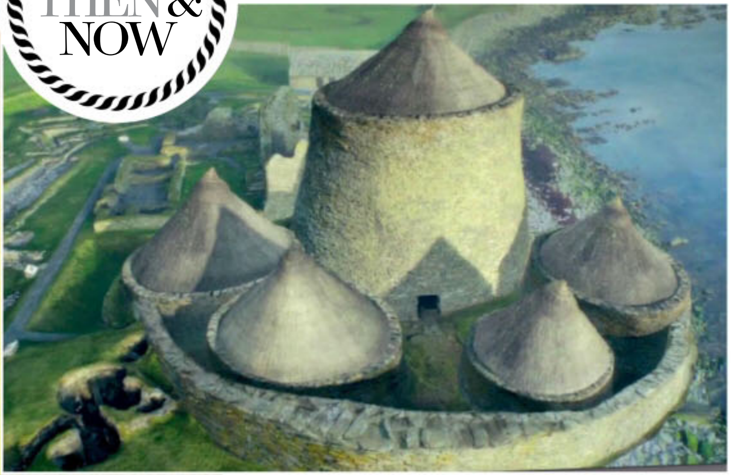
Near the Southern Tip of Mainland Shetland sits an archaeological site far more complete than its years would imply. Jarlshof, named by Sir Walter Scott and meaning 'earl's house', contains more than 4,000 years of human history in one place, and until a violent storm at the end of the 19th century exposed it, it was hidden. While wandering through this settlement, remains of late Neolithic houses can be seen, followed by Bronze Age dwellings with dark underground passages – used as grain and cold stores. Half of an Iron Age broch still remains – the other half lost to the sea, and one of the wheelhouses survives to this day. The ruins from the Viking age with its longhouse are the largest to be seen anywhere in Britain. There is even a Medieval farmhouse with barn and corn-drier.

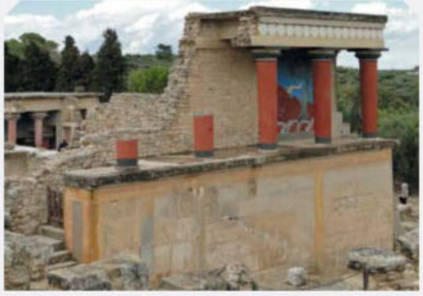


The name 'Jarlshof' was coined by Sir Walter Scott (pictured)

100 BCE

THEN & NOW





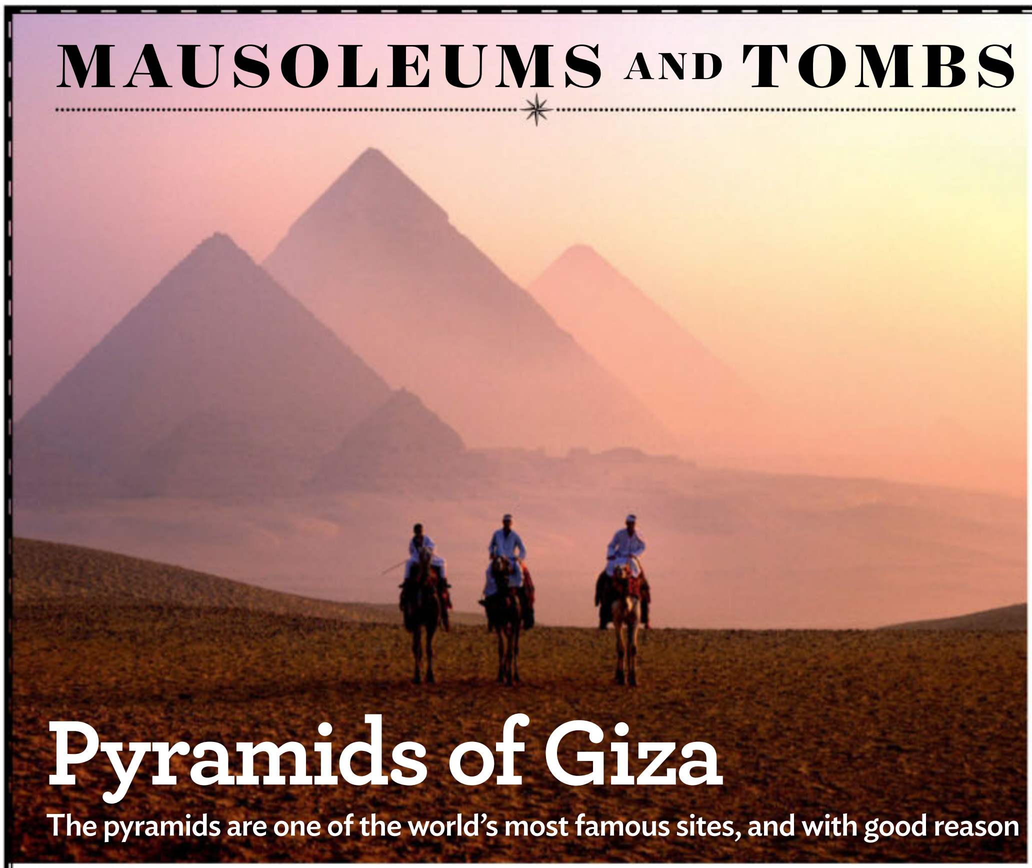
Knossos

✳ Iraklion, Greece

Five kilometres south east of the Greek city of Iraklion is the archaeological site of Knossos, hailed as the oldest city in Europe. The true age of the site is in some debate, but there is evidence humans have inhabited Knossos since the Neolithic times in 6000 BCE. A city steeped in myth and legend, the site has been ravaged and rebuilt over the centuries and served as the capital of Minoan Crete until it was abandoned in 1375 BCE. For years it was believed the city-state could be found only in fiction, until 1878 when it was discovered by Minos Kalokairinos. After extensive excavations and restorations, large parts of the palace and an elaborate maze emblazoned with wall paintings can now be explored.

© Thinkstock; TopFoto; Kieran Baxter

MAUSOLEUMS AND TOMBS



Pyramids of Giza

The pyramids are one of the world's most famous sites, and with good reason

✳ Giza, Egypt

They are among the most iconic structures in the world, seen in countless photographs, documentaries and films, but nothing comes close to viewing the Pyramids of Giza with your own eyes. These celebrated, towering resting places of god-kings are located west and south of the bustling metropolis of modern Cairo. Giza's Great Pyramid is perhaps the most famous, and the sheer cubic content of this mammoth structure is staggering, at 2.3 million cubic metres. However, the smaller pyramids of Chephren, Mycerinus and those in the eastern and western cemeteries are also essential viewing. These ancient tombs are forever guarded and watched over by the spectre of the Great Sphinx, the world's oldest monumental sculpture and a testament to human artistic achievement.

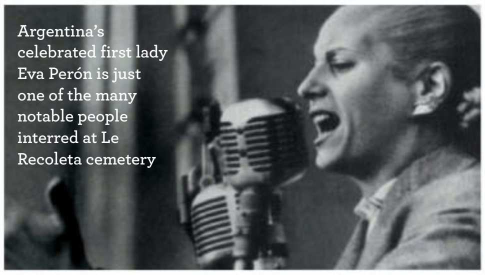
ABOVE The pyramids, here seen from the air, look out over the city of Giza and offer a spectacular view from any angle

The tomb of Cyrus the Great

✳ Pasargadae, Iran

The tomb of Cyrus the Great is not the biggest or most opulent of the sites in this guide, but its historical importance has earned it a place on the list. Located in the former Persian capital of Pasargadae, this stone monument was built as the final resting place of the founder of the Achaemenid Empire in the summer of 530 BCE. The monument measures 13 x 12 metres and features a platform of stepped stone. Inside are two chambers: an attic and the tomb itself. Visitors to this famous monument will be keeping good company, as it was visited by Alexander the Great in 330 BCE.

BELOW Treasures found inside the tomb of Cyrus the Great include a golden bed, a table set with drinking vessels, a gold coffin and some ornaments studded with precious stones



Argentina's celebrated first lady Eva Perón is just one of the many notable people interred at Le Recoleta cemetery

La Recoleta Cemetery

✳ Buenos Aires, Argentina

Any visit to Buenos Aires is incomplete without a visit to this renowned cemetery. Before Buenos Aires even had paved streets or public services, this burial site was created to improve city sanitation. Over time the elite of Argentina adopted it as their own, and today it reads as a who's who of Argentine history. Hours can be spent wandering through this city of the dead, marvelling at the famous names buried there and appreciating the fading beauty of the elaborate statues and marble mausoleums.

ABOVE In total, the cemetery in Argentina contains 4,691 above-ground vaults

Qin Shi Huang Di's tomb

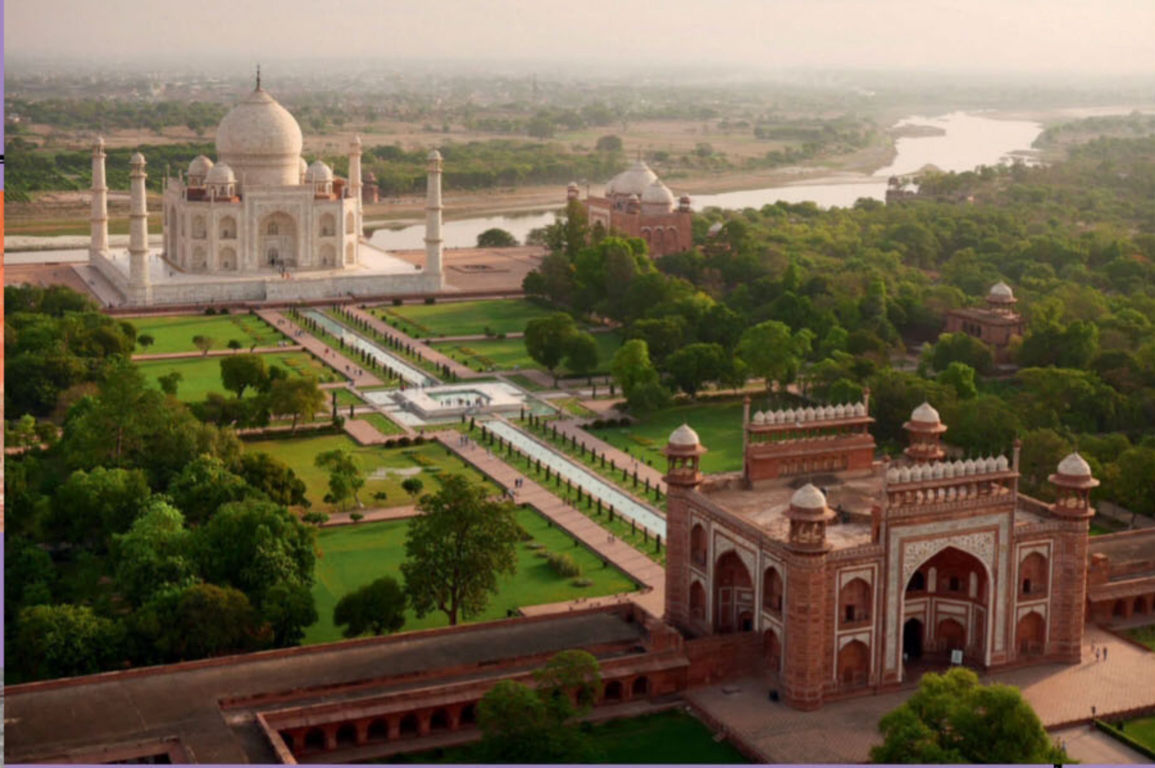
✳ Shaanxi, China

Found at the foot of the Lishan Mountain, this vast mausoleum is the largest in China, and served as the burial site of Emperor Qin Shi Huang, founder of the first unified empire. Perhaps best known for its army of stone warriors, until 1974 this wonder of the ancient world remained hidden; it was stumbled upon by two local farmers who, while digging a well, discovered a pit housing 6,000 terracotta figures. This fleet of warriors is each carved with a unique face, and equipped with weapons, chariots and horses.

ABOVE Inside the mosque area of the Taj Mahal, a beautiful example of its ornate archways and carved artwork

BELOW The tombs of Shah Jahan and Mumtaz Mahal in the Taj Mahal crypt

ABOVE The four sides of the Taj Mahal are identical, creating a sublime mirrored image



ABOVE Not often seen in images of the Taj Mahal, the main gateway of the complex is built in red sandstone

Taj Mahal

The world's most spectacular resting place

✳ **Agra, India**

An iconic image of enduring love, the Taj Mahal was built by the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan in dedication to the memory of his favourite wife, Mumtaz Mahal. This masterpiece of architecture has earned the title of one of the world's most spectacular wonders, and is one of the most admired works of art on the planet. An army of masons, painters, stone-cutters and artisans the world over combined their skills to create this feat of symmetrical beauty.

The tomb of Mahal sits in the centre of a 17-hectare complex comprising luscious blooming gardens, a mosque and a guest house. Every square inch of the Taj Mahal has been painstakingly designed, with intricate flowers carved into the marble, precious jewel inlays, incised paintings and sweeping archways. For many, the Taj comes as close as humanly possible to personifying beauty itself.

> "This masterpiece of architecture has earned the title of one of the world's most spectacular wonders"

Look out for

Get inside before the crowds and you might be lucky enough to hear 'the sound of infinity' – the eerie sound of air vibrating as it passes through the dome.

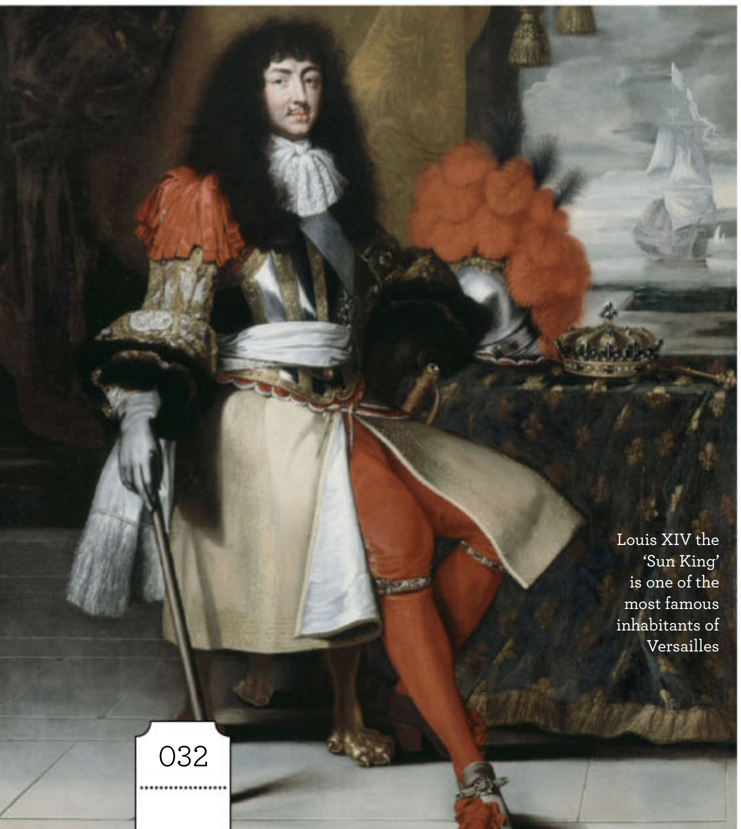
© Thinkstock; Getty; Mohammad Reza Domiri Ganji; HalloweenHJB; Samir Luther; Alamy; Amos Chapple/Rex

The Palace of Versailles

A building of unbelievable decadence

✳ Versailles, France

The Palace of Versailles initially began life as a brick and stone hunting lodge, however, when Louis XIV selected it as his royal palace, it was transformed into an immense complex. Every single detail of the magnificent building and its exquisite gardens was designed to glorify the Sun King. It was modelled specifically to represent the power of the monarchy, but after Louis XVII was forced to leave it in the midst of the French Revolution, it is now a memory and footprint of absolute monarchy in the Europe of the past. Today, Versailles is still as opulent as it was during the reign of kings. Set among 100 hectares of perfectly manicured lawns and with rooms such as the magnificent Hall of Mirrors and the sublimely Gothic chapel, Versailles boasts a splendour that can seldom be seen anywhere else in the world.



Louis XIV the 'Sun King' is one of the most famous inhabitants of Versailles

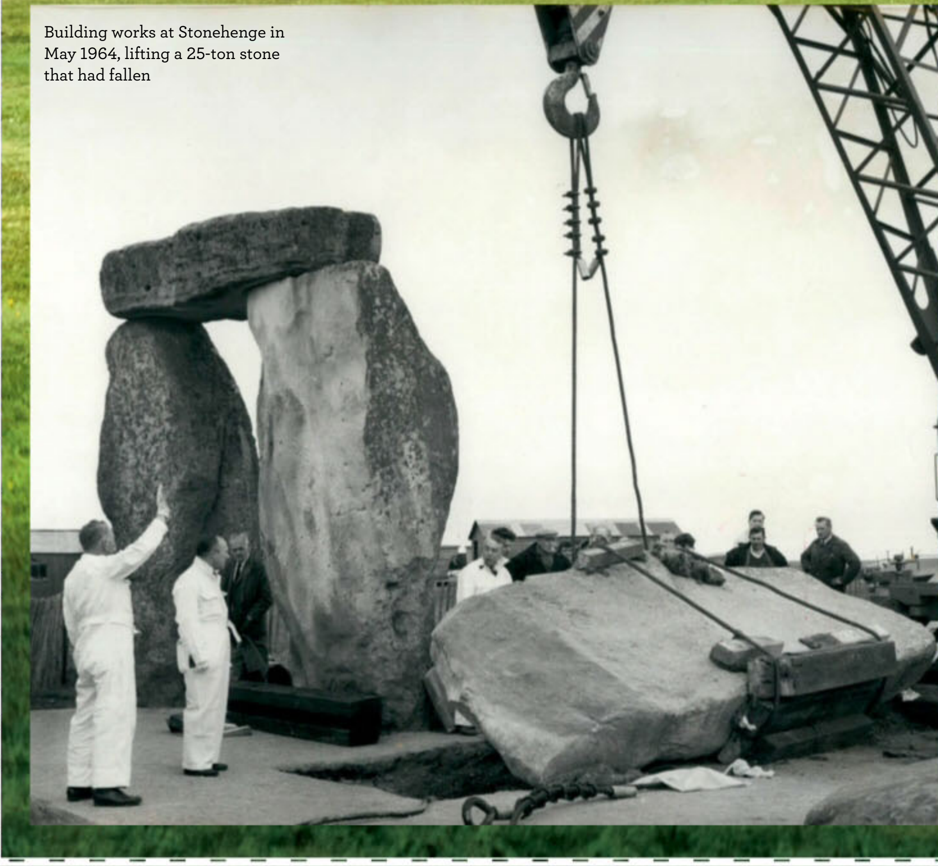
PLACES OF MYSTERY

Stonehenge

The stone circle continues to intrigue the world with myriad unanswered questions

✳ Wiltshire, England

This ancient stone monument has perplexed and inspired humans for generations, and Stonehenge is undoubtedly the most renowned stone circle on the planet. Believed to be an

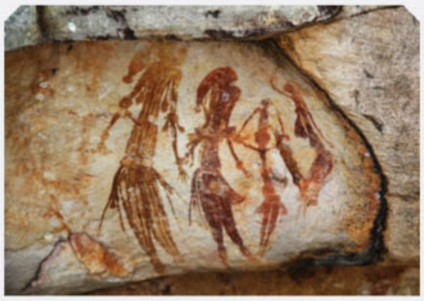


Building works at Stonehenge in May 1964, lifting a 25-ton stone that had fallen early human burial ground, archaeologists have estimated this prehistoric monument dates back to between 3000 and 2000 BCE, and was constructed over 1,500 years. Built on the axis of the midsummer sunrise, the bluestones that make up part of Stonehenge travelled a remarkable 380 kilometres from the Preseli mountains in Wales to where they stand today. The effects of the strikes of axes and hammers can still be seen on these impressive stones, and the monument truly leaves an impression of the remarkable sophistication of our ancestors.

> "The bluestones that make up part of Stonehenge travelled a remarkable 380 kilometres"

Look out for

King Barrow Ridge may be a less ostentatious Neolithic site, but the line of burial mounds offer a fantastic view over Stonehenge and its army of visitors

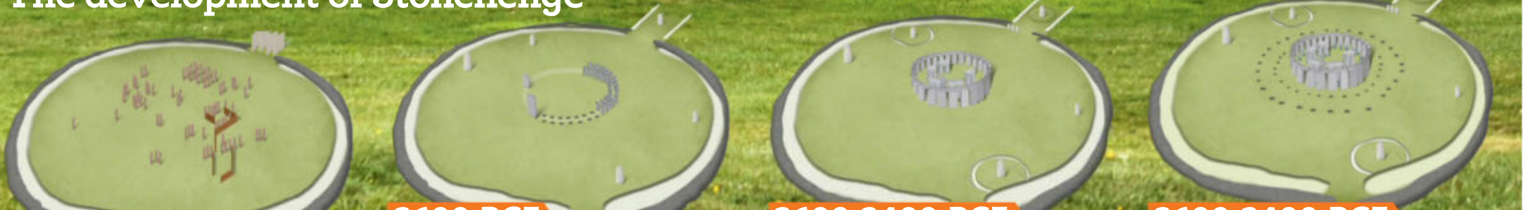


Bradshaw paintings

✳ Kimberley, Australia

In 1838, explorer Joseph Bradshaw was searching for suitable land for farming, instead he found ancient works of art tens of thousands years old. The true age of these paintings is still in debate, but more have been discovered across the sandstone regions in West and Central Kimberley. These sketchy paintings typically depict human silhouettes in headdresses and tassels that appear to be running, hunting and dancing. These shadows of ancient civilisation give an insight into the lifestyles of some of the earliest humans. These rock art galleries are likely older than the art found in Egyptian temples, and to tour even a few of the 1,500-plus rock art sites is to take a journey to the furthest reaches of human history.

The development of Stonehenge



3000 BCE

Timber posts are erected at the centre of the site and north east entrance.

2600 BCE

Bluestones are added and arranged in a double ring, along with larger sarsens. The Avenue is also dug.

2600-2400 BCE

The iconic sarsen circle and horseshoe are created, as well as small circular earthworks.

2600-2400 BCE

Bluestones are re-erected within the outer sarsen circle and pits are dug around the outside.

ABOVE The temples are made of limestone, hard wearing for the exterior and softer for interiors

Ġgantija Temples

✳ Gozo, Malta

Older than the Giza Pyramids and Stonehenge, the temples of Ġgantija rank among the earliest free-standing buildings in the world. The two temples are said to have been built in tribute to the Great Earth Mother, a goddess of fertility, and became a place of prayer and pilgrimage for the ancient people of Gozo. These two temples cover an area of 930 square metres and represent the goddess of fertility for which they were built in their round, curved structure. Each temple contains five aspses and are connected by a large forecourt, however, it is the smaller details that are most astonishing – the altars where animals were sacrificed, a stone hearth where fire burned and relief panels depicting trees, plants and animals.

© Thinkstock

The Acropolis

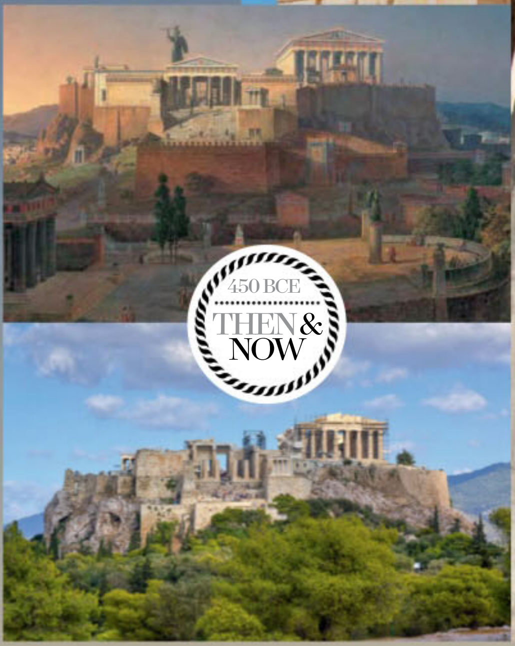
The iconic ruin perched on a hill

✳ **Athens, Greece**

In the latter half of the 5th century BCE, Pericles chose Athens to be the home of his vision of democracy, arts and philosophical thought. This dream took form on a rocky hill overlooking the city beneath, and today the remains of this monumental citadel can still be seen, explored and marvelled at. The buildings of the Acropolis are a testament to a world that birthed democracy, theatre and freedom of expression, and have survived almost 25 centuries of natural disasters, wars and an ever-changing world. After ascending the stone steps of the Acropolis, the monumental gateway, the Propylaea, can be seen. This huge entrance is dedicated to Athena and is crafted from white marble and limestone. To the south is the tiny Temple of Athena Nike, where citizens worshipped the goddess and prayed for victory. The most iconic building of all can be found in the centre of the Acropolis – the Parthenon. This immense structure took nine years to build, with every single piece uniquely created and fitted together like a monumental jigsaw. There are many Acropolises in Greece, but there is a good reason why Athens's is known as *the* Acropolis, because the majesty and beauty of these unique antiquities are unmatched anywhere else in the world.

RIGHT The beautiful sculptures of the Porch of Caryatides at the Acropolis

FAR RIGHT The awe-inspiring scale of the Temple of Hephaestus



"The majesty and beauty of these unique antiquities are unmatched anywhere else in the world"

Look out for

Head straight for the Parthenon Gallery on the third floor of the nearby Acropolis Museum for a stunning view of the site. The exhibits aren't bad either!

Mariazell shrine

✳ **Mariazell, Austria**

Hidden in the Austrian mountains, the Mariazell shrine is visited by more than 1 million pilgrims every year. Monks first began to build cells in Mariazell in 1103, and legend has it that a monk was then guided by the Virgin Mary to build a chapel there. Today the church is a culmination of centuries of renovations – from the 14th-century Gothic tower to the 17th-century baroque towers. A visit to this breathtaking basilica with its silver shrine to the Virgin Mary is a must for any lover of beauty.

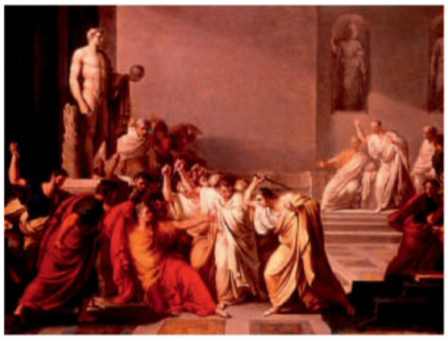
SITES OF ASSASSINATION

Theatre of Pompey (Caesar)

✳ Rome, Italy

Built by Pompey the Great in an effort to drum up political support, the Theatre of Pompey was Rome's first permanent theatre. Crafted from concrete and stone, the theatre served as an early prototype for the iconic Roman theatres built across the empire. The enormous stage (which was 100 metres wide) was just the tip of the opulence of the building, which also housed a temple and lavish gardens, all beautifully decorated with statues and embellishments.

Opposite the garden during Caesar's lifetime, there was a curia, famous as the site of his betrayal and assassination. Today, not much remains of the ground-breaking theatre, but the intact sections can still be found at the Palazzo della Cancelleria, and the imprint of the opulence that once stood there can be traced across the site.



ABOVE A 1798 painting of the dramatic death of Caesar at the hands of his senators on the Ides of March, by Italian artist Vincenzo Camuccini

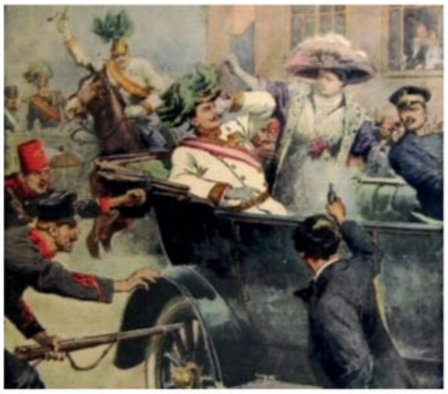
Birla House (Gandhi)

✳ New Delhi, India

Birla House, or Gandhi Smriti, originally served as the business house of the Indian tycoons, the Birla family. Mahatma Gandhi was a friend and frequent visitor to the family, and it was here during his final stay from 9 September 1947 to 30 January 1948 that the man who led India to independence was assassinated.

Today, the site has been turned into a museum in Gandhi's memory, which houses a cornucopia of treasures from Gandhi's last days including photographs, paintings and personal belongings. The room where the freedom fighter stayed has also been lovingly preserved, and visitors can also walk to view the exact spot where Mahatma Gandhi was shot, now marked by the unassuming, but sobering, Martyr's Column.

ABOVE Mahatma Gandhi meditating, praying and singing bhajans at his last prayer meeting in Birla House, New Delhi, India, in January 1948



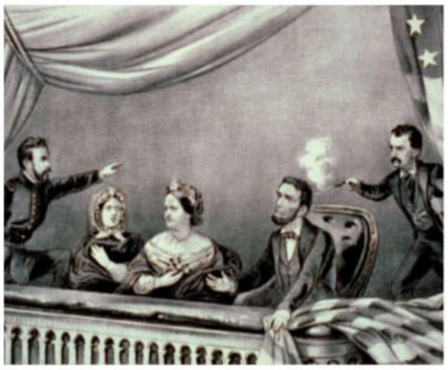
ABOVE A depiction of Gavrilo Princip firing the shot that changed the 20th century, which featured in *Domenica Del Corriere*, an Italian paper

Latin Bridge (Franz Ferdinand)

✳ Sarajevo, Bosnia & Herzegovina

On 28 June 1914, the archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir presumptive to the Austro-Hungarian throne, was shot dead by Gavrilo Princip. This assassination prompted a war that consumed the world – World War I. Today, the site of the shooting is one of the most historically significant locations on the planet. The bridge itself, now named Latin Bridge, is one of the oldest preserved bridges in Sarajevo, and stretches across the Miljacka river on four arches. However, it is the bridge's historical importance that draws travellers from across the globe.

At one point there was a monument to the archduke placed nearby, but this has since been torn down, and now an unassuming plaque at the spot where Princip fired explains the deadly events that occurred on the bridge. For anyone with a strong interest in 20th century history, this bridge is simply a must see, and it is the perfect place to find quiet reflection on the shot that shook the foundations of the world.



ABOVE John Wilkes Booth pulls the trigger in the box of Ford's Theatre, killing the president and changing the course of American history

Ford's Theatre (Abraham Lincoln)

✳ Washington, DC, USA

In the 1860s, what was originally a house of worship was transformed into a theatre by John T Ford. Although the original was destroyed by a fire, the rebuilt theatre was declared a "magnificent new thespian temple." On 14 April 1865, five days after the Confederate surrender, President Lincoln attended the theatre, but his trip was to end in disaster. The actor and staunch Confederate John Wilkes Booth stepped into the box and shot Lincoln at point-blank range. The building was not used as a theatre again until 1968, and it was renovated again in 2009. Although it operates as a theatre today, the historical significance of the building has been preserved in the museum that sits beneath it. Here, a multitude of items related to the assassination can be viewed – including the pistol used by Booth, Booth's diary, as well as Lincoln's personal items.

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PERU
MACHU PICCHU

Decode the Secrets of Machu Picchu

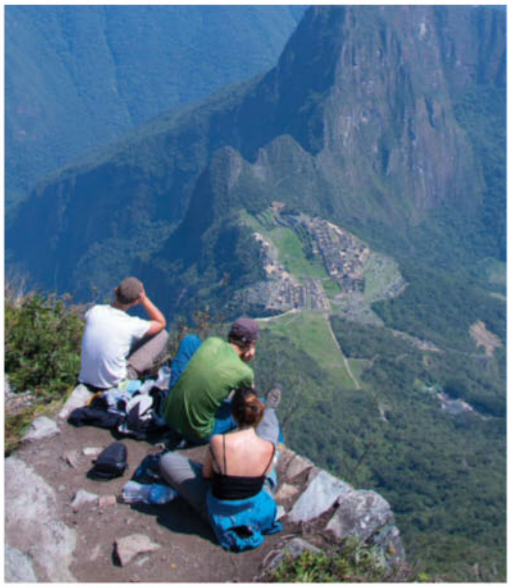
Emperors, high priests, virgins, mummies, fortune hunters – Machu Picchu's story is an intriguing one. Incredibly, it is also a puzzle yet to be solved

WORDS BY MAUREEN SANTUCCI

Perched high on a grassed peak, shrouded by the Peruvian cloud jungle, Machu Picchu has been added to an increasing number of people's must-see travel lists. This impressive archaeological site is one of the only Inca constructions left largely undestroyed by time or the Spanish conquest, and is a living testimony to the engineering ingenuity that its inhabitants possessed. But within its impeccable ruins lie mysteries waiting to be solved. The questions of why it was built, who lived there and how they built with such complex methods can be explored when you visit – if you know where to look.

“The Inca oral tradition may provide us with some of the best clues”

Building the City in the Sky



Building Machu Picchu on the site that we see it today was possible in part due to the presence of ample amounts of granite, as the Inca built entirely from stone, with only roofs made from other materials. One of the most fascinating aspects of the Inca was their ability to construct beautiful and incredibly stable stone walls without mortar between them. To this day, it is impossible to duplicate their techniques using what we know they had at hand.

One of the most striking elements when you visit the site is the sheer size of the blocks used. In Sacsayhuaman, a site just above the city of Cusco, one of the blocks is estimated to weigh more than 100 tons. To further add to the complexity of the job, there were no metal tools to use in cutting and shaping, and no wheels to move the stones.

It is believed that a system of ropes and logs was used to roll the stones to the building site. Various techniques may have been used in the cutting, depending on the degree of finesse needed. Fire and water might have been used to split rocks, and other various types of rocks could have been used to chip away to get the shape desired. Each were painstakingly shaped so that one fit perfectly on top of another.

What has come to light in more recent years is that a great deal of the building effort actually took place below the surface in setting up layers of foundation that would allow for more stability as well as water drainage. In fact, Inca walls are generally so stable that in Cusco, where colonial buildings were often built on top of Inca palaces, there were earthquakes during which the colonial walls fell and the Inca walls stayed standing.

The Inca civilisation began around 1100 or 1200 and lasted until the Spanish conquest in 1532. They first came to power in Peru and, under the emperor known as Pachacutec or Pachacuti (1438-71), they further expanded, creating an empire that included parts of Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Argentina and Chile.

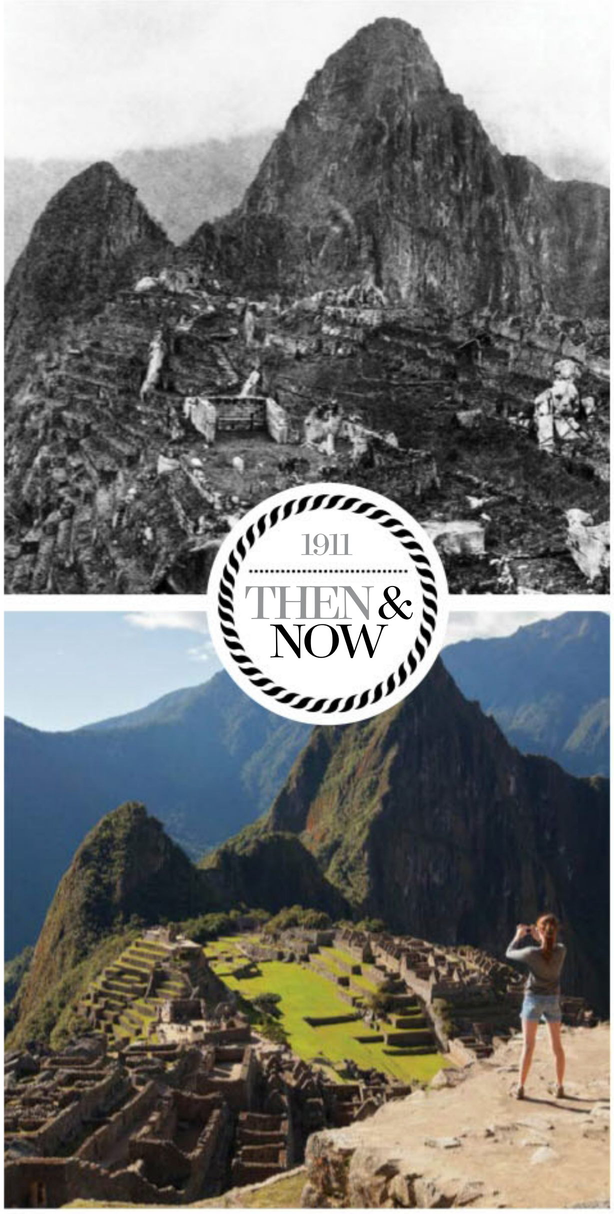
While there is agreement on when the site at Machu Picchu was built – in the mid-1400s – and by who, it can still not be said with complete certainty what its purpose was. The Inca had no form of written communication, and used quipu – counting devices made using coloured yarn and tying knots in a specific sequence – for counting and keeping track of such things as inventory. There is no evidence that these were used to record narratives, though this may be due in part to the fact that relatively few quipu survived.

With no written language, there were no existing histories of the Inca before the Spanish arrived. All the accounts that we have regarding the Inca past were written either by the Spanish or by writers who were half-Spanish and half-Quechua. In addition, the writings were often based on an oral history that could have been mutated by the passing down of stories.

However, Carlos Velaochaga, a Peruvian anthropologist specialising in cultural anthropology, has dedicated the last 30 years to investigating Inca religion in the Andes and believes that, "The myths and legends passed down in the Inca oral tradition may provide us with some of the best clues about them. Although written in allegorical fashion, they may well contain some important facts."

Draw your own conclusions

So, what are the explanations derived from these clues that have been, or are now, most often cited as to the site's purpose? Although it may seem frustrating that we can't know, this also gives you an opportunity to see which theory makes the most sense to you, or make your own.



Exploring the theories

Why was Machu Picchu Built?

The theories of why Machu Picchu was built and abandoned have been pieced together from archaeological evidence, chronicles and cultural understanding of the Inca people. It is widely accepted that it was, at the very least, an estate for Pachacutec (pictured left). Whether this may have included some of the other theories is not known. Given they seem to have been quite a practical people, it seems reasonable to think a place this size would not have been used for one purpose alone.

Religious centre

When the mummies that Bingham discovered were first analysed, it was believed that they were almost entirely women. This led to the theory that they were Virgins of the Sun and this, combined with the many temples on the site, gave it religious significance.

Fortress to defend water

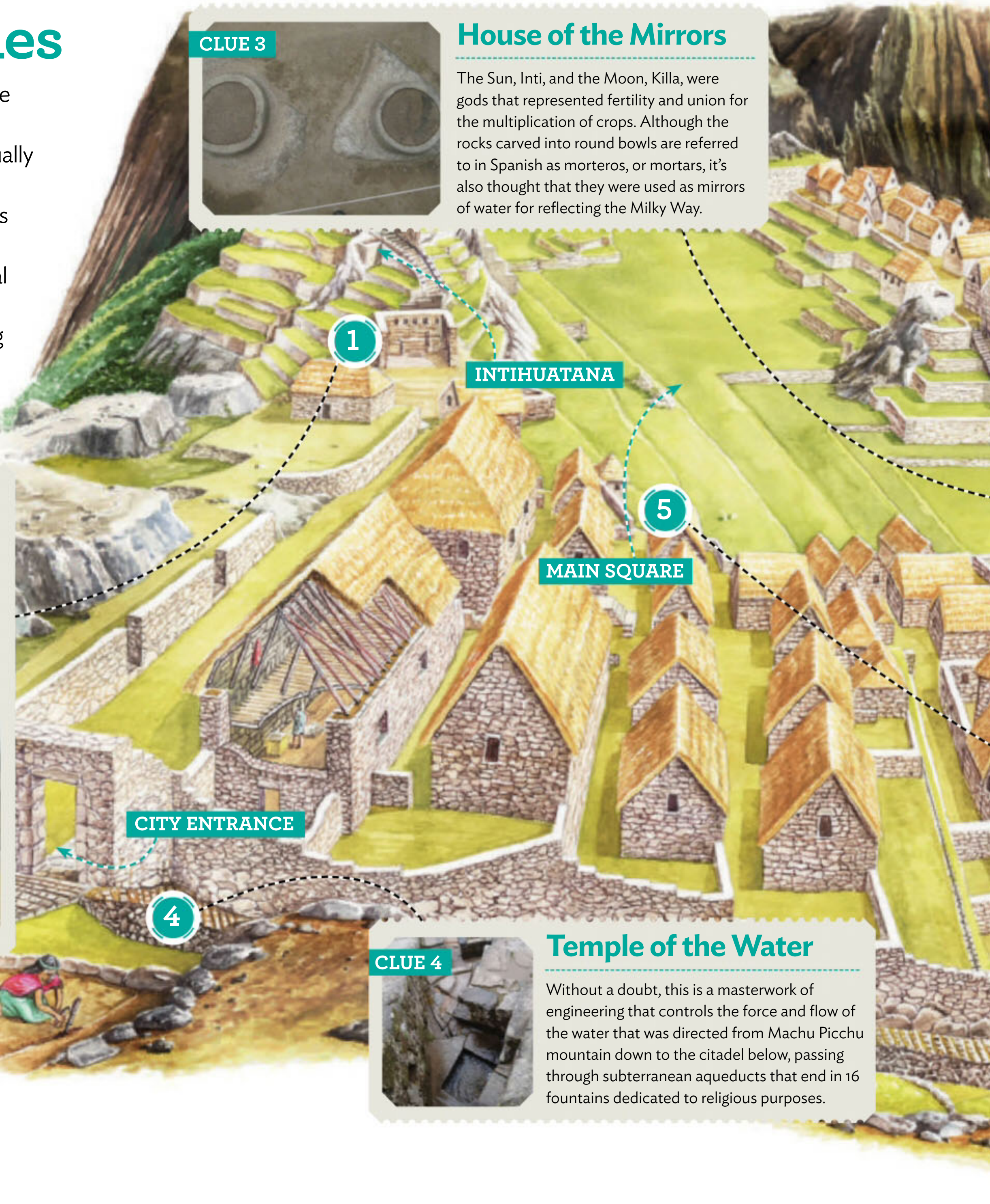
Although it may seem that the ruins at Machu Picchu are situated in a fairly remote location to us now, Machu Picchu would have been a strategic location in its day, necessary as it would have been in the midst of several towns, and close to some antagonistic tribes.

Royal estate

It was fairly common for the Inca ruler of the time to have his own personal estate constructed. As the greatest leader that the Inca had and were to ever know, it stands to reason that Pachacutec would have ordered the construction of the most impressive one of all.

The key clues

Much of what has been found are the typical items of daily use at a royal estate such as this. It is actually the buildings of Machu Picchu themselves, and the various areas of the site, that provide many clues that, coupled with historical chronicles, help us understand the purposes behind the building of Machu Picchu. Here's where you can find them



CLUE 3

House of the Mirrors

The Sun, Inti, and the Moon, Killa, were gods that represented fertility and union for the multiplication of crops. Although the rocks carved into round bowls are referred to in Spanish as morteros, or mortars, it's also thought that they were used as mirrors of water for reflecting the Milky Way.

Temple of the Three Windows

The windows relate to the division of the Andean world into three parts: the Hanaq Pacha (upper world), Kay Pacha (middle world), and the Ukhu Pacha (lower world). The temple is aligned to connect with the time of the dead, the living, and the future.

CLUE 1

CLUE 4

Temple of the Water

Without a doubt, this is a masterwork of engineering that controls the force and flow of the water that was directed from Machu Picchu mountain down to the citadel below, passing through subterranean aqueducts that end in 16 fountains dedicated to religious purposes.

Emperor’s mausoleum

Sometimes cited as a separate theory, it was also common that the Inca ruler’s personal estate would become his mausoleum upon death. A Spanish chronicler, however, Juan Diez de Betanzos, stated that his resting place was actually in Cusco.

ABOVE Inside what remains of the mausoleum building at Machu Picchu

Why was Machu Picchu Abandoned?

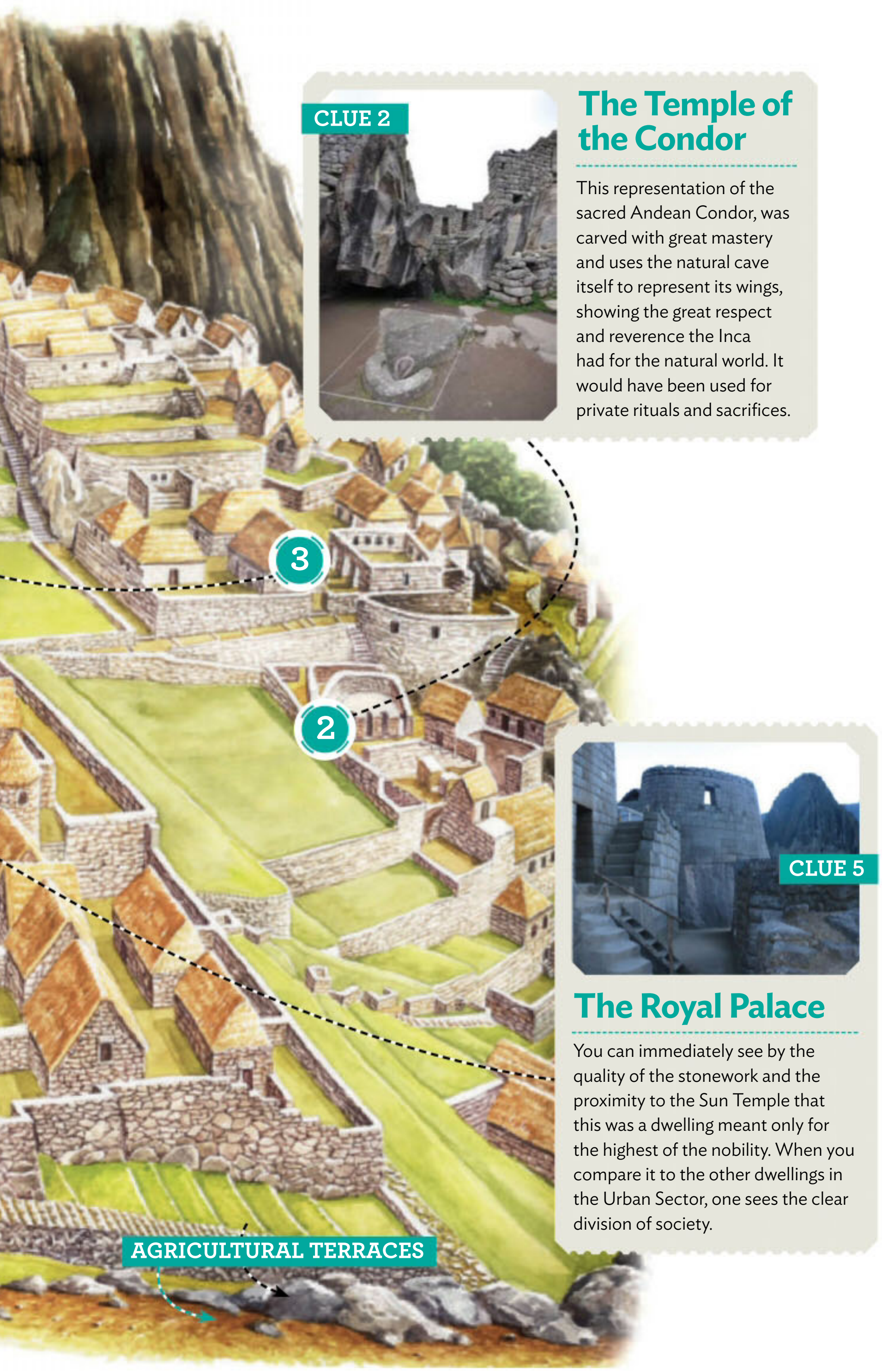
We know its residents did abandon Machu Picchu largely because the Spanish never found it as well as the fact that, as best we can tell, no great riches were ever found there. It is not certain why, however. Among the possibilities are because disease, brought by the Spanish, killed the inhabitants; that because of the Spanish, supplies were unable to reach it; or that it was abandoned so that the Spanish would not find it.

Purposeful abandonment

Given the religious significance of the site, once the Spanish conquest was under way, it may have been abandoned, rather than risk its destruction by the conquistadors. It was likely largely left unmanned since the death of Pachacutec anyway.

Lack of supplies

Although there were some crops being grown at Machu Picchu, there was likely not enough varied supplies to properly provide for the people living there. Once the Spanish took over the Cusco region, there would have been no way for the supplies to reach the site.



CLUE 2

The Temple of the Condor

This representation of the sacred Andean Condor, was carved with great mastery and uses the natural cave itself to represent its wings, showing the great respect and reverence the Inca had for the natural world. It would have been used for private rituals and sacrifices.

CLUE 5

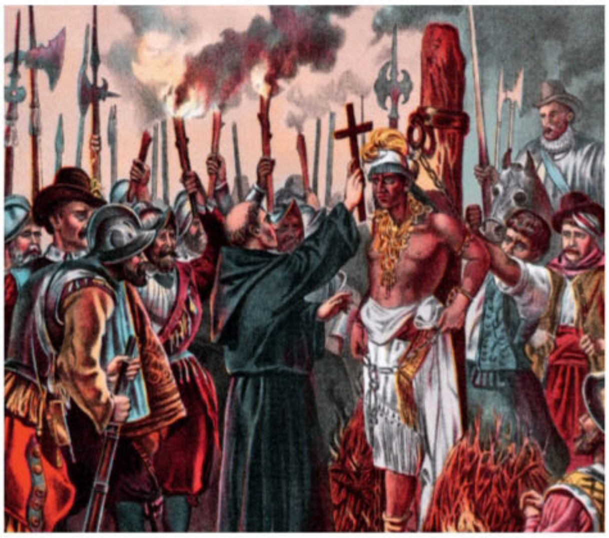
The Royal Palace

You can immediately see by the quality of the stonework and the proximity to the Sun Temple that this was a dwelling meant only for the highest of the nobility. When you compare it to the other dwellings in the Urban Sector, one sees the clear division of society.

When we take a look at the archaeological evidence that has been uncovered at Machu Picchu, one thing is certain. The Spanish never came across this site, as it was found largely intact when Hiram Bingham documented his expedition there in 1911. Just as clear, however, is that it was abandoned by those who lived there, the reason for which presents us with another mystery.

The emperor Pachacutec died around 1471 and was succeeded by his son Topa Yupanqui and then by his grandson, Huayna Capac. The death of Huayna Capac ended in a rivalry between his two sons, Huáscar, who took over in Cusco, and Atahualpa, who was ruling the northern part of the empire from Quito in Ecuador. This civil war weakened the Inca empire and helped create the circumstances in which the Spanish conquistadors took over the empire.

After an uneasy coexistence, with the Spanish firmly in power in Cusco, the de facto Inca ruler, Manco Inca, escaped with his family and followers to Vilcabamba, where he established his last stronghold. They held out for eight years before the Spanish were finally able to defeat them.



ABOVE Spanish conquistadores arrived in Peru in the 16th century, and took advantage of a civil war between Inca brothers Emperor Atahualpa and Huáscar to take power. This image depicts Atahualpa burning at the hands of the Spanish

It was actually this lost city of Vilcabamba that Hiram Bingham set out to find on his expedition in 1911. Although the area that Machu Picchu was found in did not match the location described for Vilcabamba, Bingham was convinced that the site could only be that "Lost City of the Incas". But he was not the first to find Machu Picchu. Locals knew of the site, and Albert Giesecke, the rector of Cusco University, had told Bingham about ruins in the area of Machu Picchu.

In 1867, a German named Augusto Berns also knew of the area, and a map from that year drawn up by German engineer Herman Göhring showed 'Macchu Picchu' and 'Huaina Picchu'. Charles Wiener, a traveller from France, made reference to 'Huaina Picchu and Matcho Picchu' in a book he wrote in 1875. However, it was Bingham's studies of the site that made it known to the rest of the world.

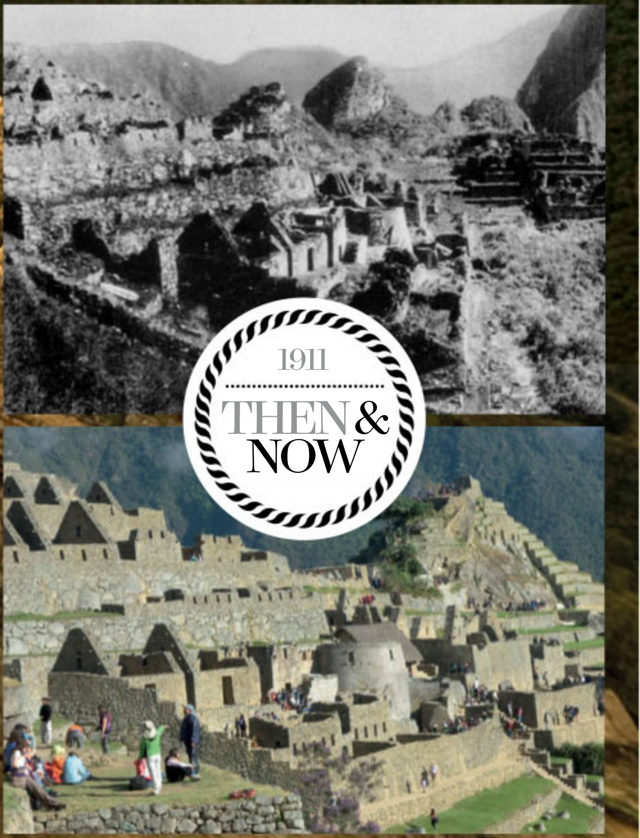
ABOVE Hiram Bingham, whose expedition to Machu Picchu in 1911 sparked new interest and findings

> **"It's easy to mark the sacred sites as you walk through Machu Picchu"**

With this excavation began the theories about why Machu Picchu was constructed. Bingham found a large number of mummies, and with the scientific techniques available, it was believed that the mummies were predominantly women. This led to the theory that they were Virgins of the Sun, chosen women who dedicated their lives to the emperor, who was believed to be the child of the Sun. The first theory about the site was, therefore, that it was built for religious purposes.

Another point in favour of this theory was the presence of several temples (these could be identified by the stonework used when building them). The Inca constructed their buildings using stone, and employed different techniques depending on the purpose of the building. Their finest techniques were reserved for temples and palaces. Actually, as the emperor was considered to be a god, both temples and palaces would be sacred. This finer building was done by chiselling huge white granite without the use of iron tools. This type of rock is difficult to work as it is hard, and contains 60 per cent quartz. The blocks were cut and finished so perfectly that they fit together without the use of mortar. This technique still cannot be duplicated using the techniques and materials known to be available at that time.

Even if they weren't labelled with this stonework, it's easy to mark the sacred sites as you walk through Machu Picchu. You will also see structures that are



ABOVE The ruins have been tidied and to some extent restored since Hiram Bingham's work in 1911 made from other, not so fine, building techniques. Paying attention to the building techniques is one way to get a feel for the social structure of the times, which was very definitely class-based. A great place to do this is to stand by the Sun Temple, with its beautiful curved wall, and look down toward the Urban Sector.

Although later research with more modern forensic science asserted that the mummies Bingham found were actually fairly evenly split between men and women, he was not necessarily wrong about the religious significance of the site. Nor are the other theories of the site as an administrative centre, a royal estate, or a mausoleum necessarily wrong.

Emperor Pachacutec had made a habit of building estates in the areas where there were tribes that he had conquered. Prior to Machu Picchu, he had done this in Pisac and in Ollantaytambo in the Sacred Valley outside of Cusco. It makes sense that he might do so in the area of Machu Picchu where he had also successfully conquered the local tribes.

ABOVE The aryballos (top) and bismuth bronze dagger (bottom) are just two of the Inca treasures discovered at the site

Spot sacred Inca sights

Yieber Cueva Lucana has been working as a licensed tour guide in Cusco and the surrounding area for more than 12 years. Like Velaochaga, he too finds that listening to stories told by his family (he grew up speaking Quechua) has provided him with a deeper understanding of the culture than his degree in tourism. “The Inca did nothing without first considering the religious aspects, and this is easily seen when considering the building site for Machu Picchu. First, it is surrounded by Apus, high mountains that were considered to be protective gods.

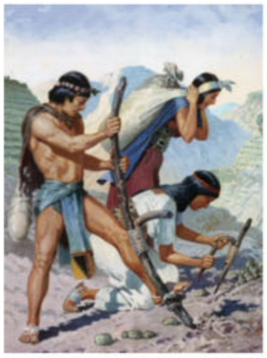
“Everyone is awed by the surrounding landscape when they come to Machu Picchu. But while you’re taking pictures of it, really stop and look without your camera. You’ll see breathtaking peaks everywhere you look.

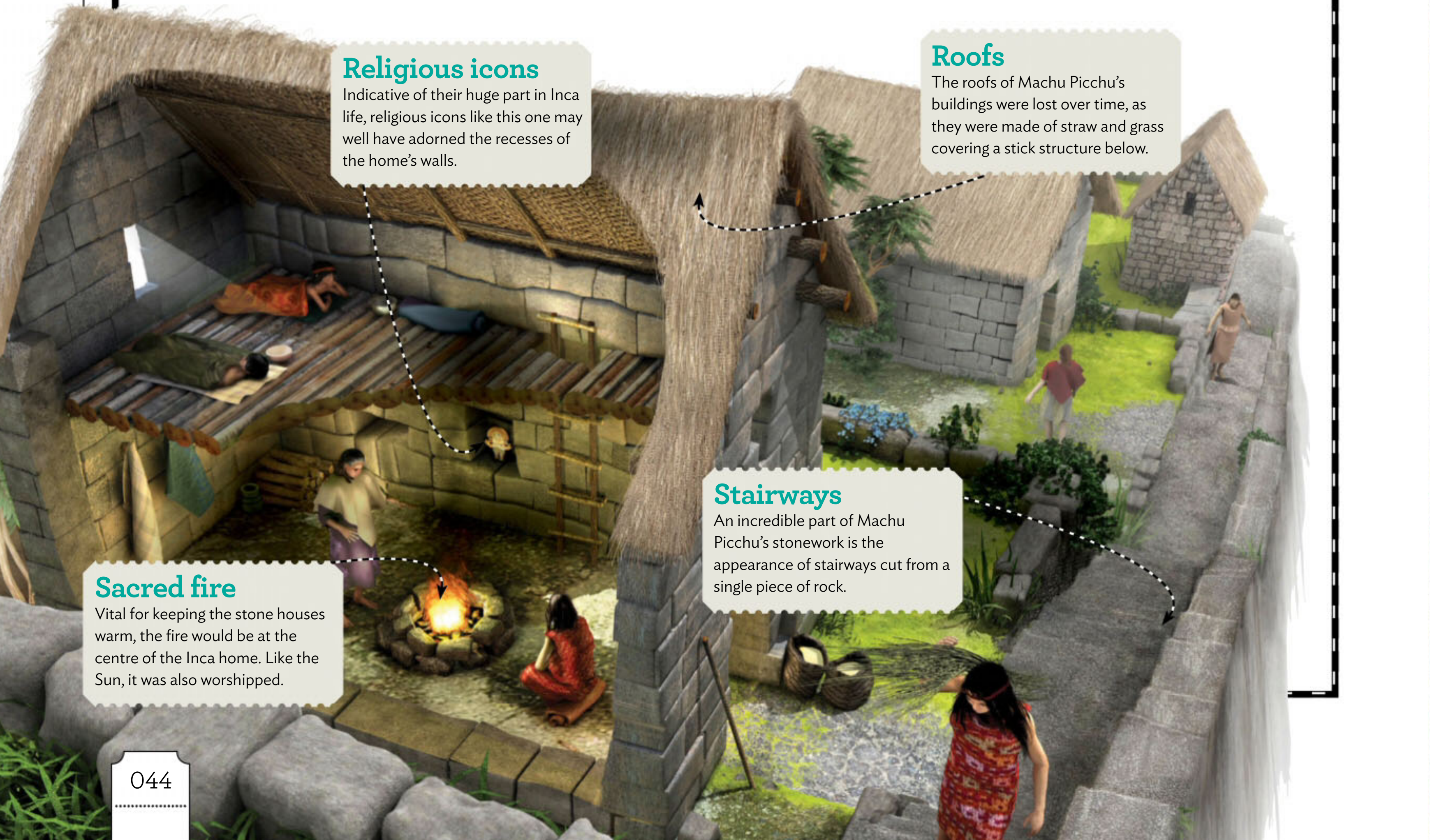
How did the Incas live?

Our knowledge of what Inca lives were like is based largely on accounts written after the Spanish conquest. In turn, these accounts were based on oral traditions that had been handed down, or on direct observation of the people themselves.

The key aspect of the Inca and Quechua people was that they were deeply religious and, with the emperor being the son of a god, devotion to him was paramount. Each person was expected to fulfil their necessary duties to the emperor, to the gods and to their families. This could take the form of military service, service according to the person’s profession, or tithing part of the crops that were grown.

Service could also be expected in the form of helping to build the great constructions that the empire required. Therefore, though building a place like Machu Picchu would take years (it’s estimated to have taken at least 50) and a lot of manpower, access to such a labour force was inherent in the way the government was constructed.





Religious icons

Indicative of their huge part in Inca life, religious icons like this one may well have adorned the recesses of the home’s walls.

Roofs

The roofs of Machu Picchu’s buildings were lost over time, as they were made of straw and grass covering a stick structure below.

Stairways

An incredible part of Machu Picchu’s stonework is the appearance of stairways cut from a single piece of rock.

Sacred fire

Vital for keeping the stone houses warm, the fire would be at the centre of the Inca home. Like the Sun, it was also worshipped.

Machu Picchu's altitude and location mean that weather is never predictable, so come prepared for anything

Looking down into the Temple of the Sun, one of the best known parts of the site

BELOW This quaint bridge is part of the Inca Trail, the way by which many walkers reach the site at Machu Picchu

"Then, far below lies the Urubamba River. If you look down over the side you will see it snaking around the site. While all water was considered sacred, this river, which was felt to mirror the Milky Way in the Urubamba Valley, and encircles Machu Picchu like the serpent that they also considered sacred, was especially auspicious.

"Once the Inca decided to build there, they would have to consider the Sun, their primary deity. As you visit the areas of the Temple of the Three Windows, and the Temple of the Mirrors in the Urban Sector, pay attention to the directions. You will find that there are windows that face directly east, welcoming the Sun. You will also find throughout the complex niches, where mummies of revered ancestors were kept, that these face East."

Sun, solstices and the citadel

It is truly remarkable the Inca were able to build their temples taking the pathway of the Sun at the time of the solstices into account. One of the windows in the Temple of the Sun and a corner of the Intihuatana is oriented directly toward the place that the Sun rises during the winter solstice. The other window of the Sun Temple is oriented toward the Sun Gate, where the sun rises on the Summer Solstice. During the solstices, the Intihuatana is oriented so perfectly that no shadow is cast.

Within Machu Picchu, in the temple area, there is a spot that lines up perfectly on the solstice with another sacred spot in Llactapata, a temple located on a hilltop several miles across the valley. Near the main temple you will also find a rock that represents the Southern Cross, whose corners align with the cardinal directions and the largest mountains that surround the citadel.

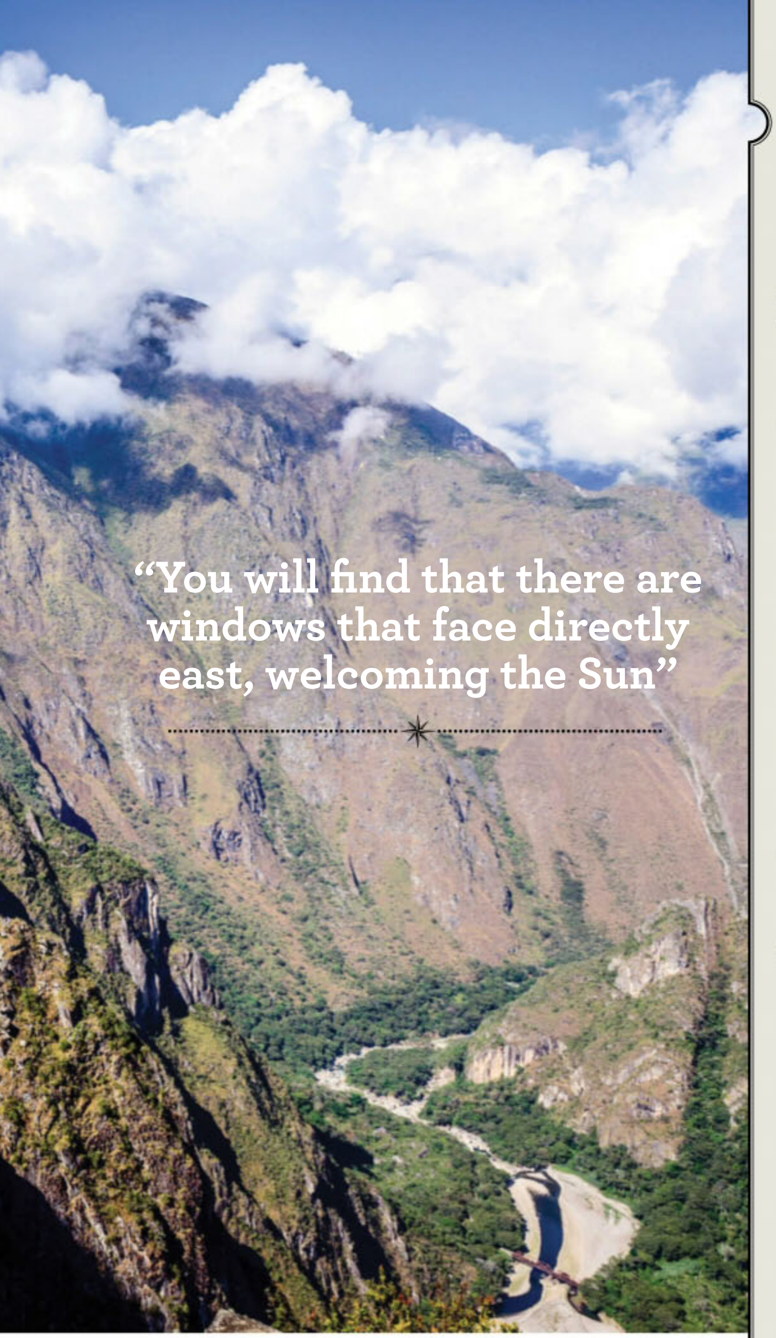
That it was also the royal estate of Pachacutec is almost certain, as it was built during his reign and it was customary for the Inca to have private palaces in Cusco and elsewhere. There are Spanish records that state that Pachacutec's descendants were asking for the rights to his estate at 'Piccho', and this is believed to be referring to Machu Picchu.

It was also common that such an estate would later be used as the Inca's mausoleum. There is a spot at Machu Picchu labelled as the Royal Tomb. However, this name and others used at the site were assigned by Bingham, and are not necessarily correct. Pachacutec's mummy was never found here, and is recorded as having been discovered by the Spanish in Cusco. Its final resting spot has yet to be found.

Despite all remaining uncertainties, research continues, and with each new find comes the opportunity to discover new clues about the secrets Machu Picchu may hold. Not only may new archaeological evidence come to light, but there may well be further written records archived away in Lima yet to be researched. In the meantime, though, despite the many visitors to Machu Picchu each year, you can still find yourself on a stretch of path on your own, feeling that you could be back in the time of the Inca. The lack of certainty is a rare opportunity to let your own imagination fly.

ABOVE Viewing Machu Picchu from the air offers an entirely new perspective, and shows how big the site really is

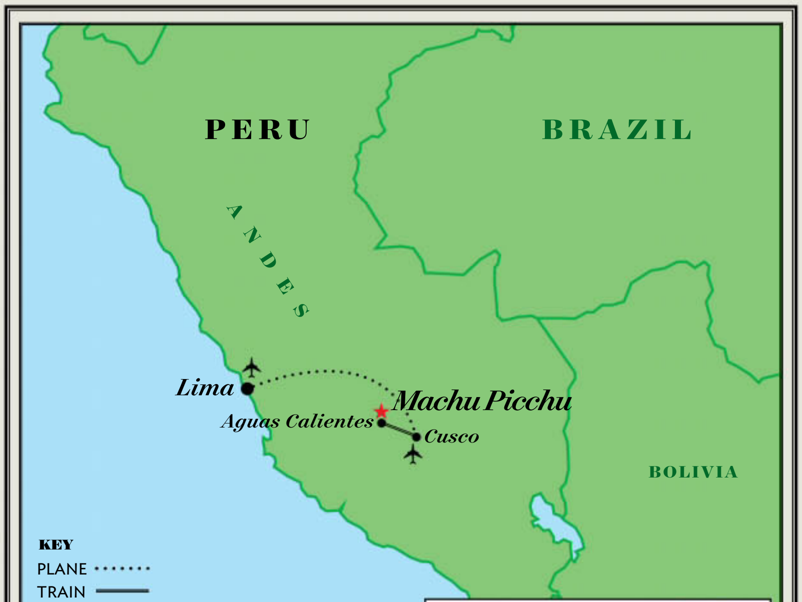
RIGHT Children dressed in traditional Peruvian clothing look out over the ruins of the Inca city of Machu Picchu



> “You will find that there are windows that face directly east, welcoming the Sun”

MACHU PICCHU

EXPLORER’S ESSENTIALS



Essential information

You will need to fly first in to Lima, then to Cusco, the closest airport to Machu Picchu. The only way in to Aguas Calientes, the town at the foot of Machu Picchu, is by train or foot. From here, to get to the site itself you must hike or take a bus that takes about 20 minutes. You can purchase entrance tickets in the office in Cusco or in Aguas Calientes. You cannot buy your ticket at the front gate. Cusco is 11,152 feet above sea level and Machu Picchu is 7,972 feet so it’s important to give yourself time to adjust. There are no vaccinations required to visit Machu Picchu.

When to visit The dry season – between May and September – is best, with May and September being ideal.

Time zone UTC-5:00

Currency Peruvian Sol

Where to stay

Luxury

Inkaterra Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel

This five-star hotel is one of the best available in the area, and as such is priced from $650 (£450) per night. This hotel is an excellent choice for families, as it has a great expanse of nature trails for you to explore.

Good value

Casa del Sol

A truly lovely hotel, the Casa del Sol offers a luxurious and more romantic experience than other hotels, for a more comfortable price than the Inkaterra. Rooms start at $240 (£170) per night. Be sure to get a riverside room for the best experience.

Basic

Casa Andina

Somewhat more reasonably priced with rooms from $140 (£97) per night, this is a clean, comfortable option that offers excellent service. As one of the few hotels that can offer visitors adjoining rooms, it’s also a great choice for families.

Links

www.museomachupicchu.com The Machu Picchu Museum in Cusco

www.machupicchu.gob.pe Get your Machu Picchu tickets here

adventureheartperu.com Adventure Heart Peru travel agency, based in Cusco

03 things to see & do

Huayna Picchu

☐ If you hike to the top and around to the other side, you can visit the Temple of the Moon and the Great Cavern for a chance to get away from tourists.

Inca Bridge

☐ This is another less visited area, especially first thing in the morning. Once you see it, you’ll know the Inca could not have been afraid of heights.

Sun Gate

☐ Many people do hike up here, and it offers great views of the citadel below. If you can’t get entrance tickets to Huayna Picchu, this is where to go.

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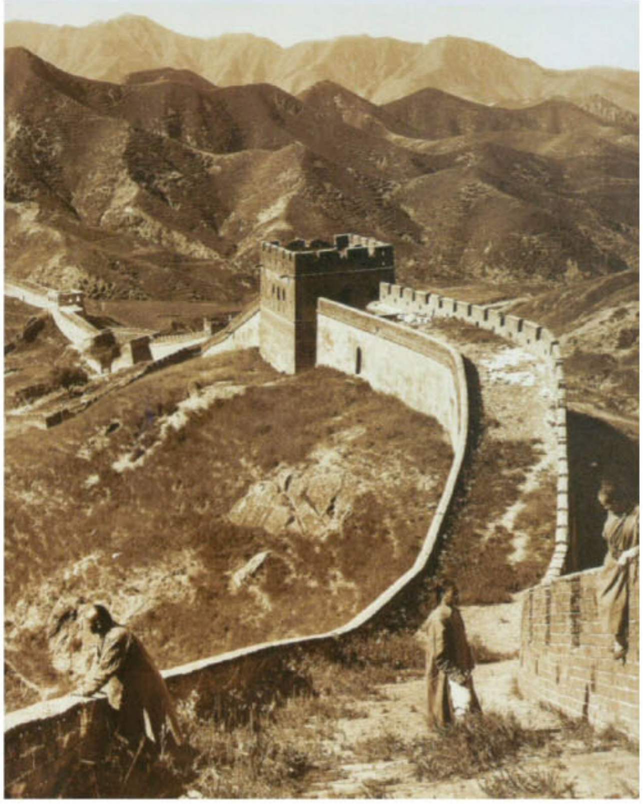
Saving the GREAT WALL OF CHINA

WORDS BY DOM RESEIGH-LINCOLN

CHINA
BEIJING

After more than 2,000 years of storied history, this monumental feat of human achievement is on the brink of destruction. But if we act now, it can be saved



ABOVE The almost 300-year-long Ming dynasty saw the most productive era of Great Wall construction, adding features such as these brick watchtowers

LEFT The Great Wall of China in 1917, before restoration work began and before the swell of tourism to the wall

Standing on the Great Wall of China, it might seem indestructible. The sheer scale is immense, stretching a staggering 21,196 kilometres. It has endured, in one form or another, for over 2,000 years and has seen empires literally rise and fall around it. It's been moulded in the shape of its creators and rebuilt in the image of its successors and yet it has survived to this day.

The wall is not only a Chinese icon, as its size and infamy ensure that it is also a global one. But after more than 2,000 years of service the Great Wall is not the sturdy structure it once was. After centuries of poor care and decades of tourism, this once rock solid wall is on a path that could see it fall apart in as little as two decades. Around 30 per cent of the structure has already fallen into total disrepair (that's about 1,961 kilometres, completely lost so far) and further sections are in grave danger of a similar fate.

The wall itself dates back some 2,200 years to when it was a series of smaller walls spread across multiple regions in the feudal states of northern China. By the time the warlord and prince Qin Shi Huang unified the nation in 221 BCE, proclaiming himself as the First Emperor, a plan was already in place to create a grand defensive boundary. The new structure was built not just as a monument to Qin's power but as a practical means of protecting the kingdom against the Xiongnu nomads to the north.

"The purpose of the Great Wall was only in part to keep out the northern barbarians," reveals British historian, author and travel writer John Man. "The First Emperor suddenly controlled a massive army and a workforce of millions. He had the means and the cash to build on an unprecedented scale. The wall and other vast

"After centuries of poor care, the wall could fall apart in two decades"

projects – canals, roads, palaces – were symbols of his power, and also ways of keeping his population busy."

While many of the dynasties that followed came to add to the structure, it wasn't until the Ming dynasty (1368-1644) that the Great Wall as we know it today began to take shape. Following a defeat to the Mongol hordes at the Battle of Tumu, Emperor Zhengtong began the construction of a brand new wall, built not of stone, but of brick. Lined with watchtowers it was as much a barricade as a boundary and over the centuries it repelled countless Mongol attacks throughout the Ming line.

During the Manchu dynasty (1644-1911) that followed, the Great Wall was no longer the frontline royal boundary it had been under the Ming, since most of Mongolia and the surrounding northern territories had already been annexed into the kingdom. It was here the Great Wall's fall from grace began. "It was very expensive to keep up," adds Man. "Ministers often argued about whether to spend money maintaining the Wall. And under two dynasties, the Mongols (1234-1368) and the Manchus (1644-1911), the emperors ruled on both sides of the Wall, so they let it crumble."

The Xinhai Revolution of 1911, which forced the Qing dynasty out of power, saw the wall reaffirmed as a symbol of Chinese achievement and power, but the failure of the Republic of China allowed the Great Wall to descend into disrepute as the rise of Socialism once again deemed it a symbol of an old world best forgotten.

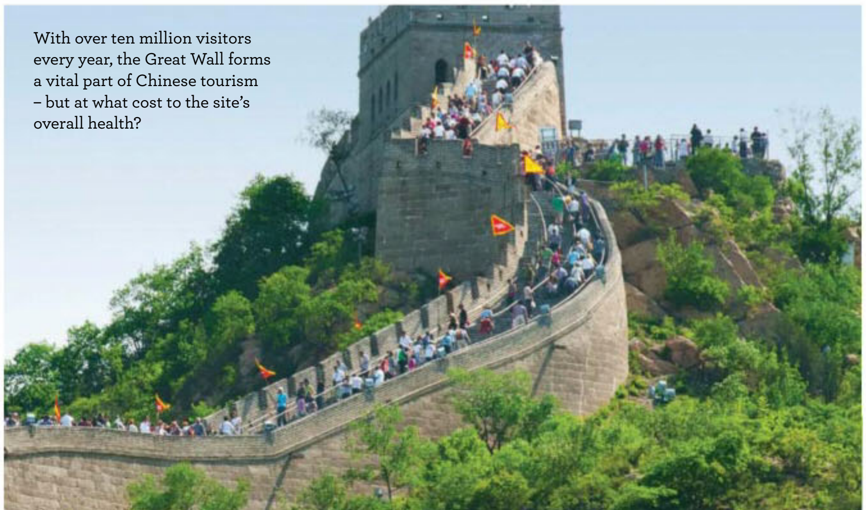
After such an illustrious history, what does the future hold for the Great Wall? As China's most recognisable

MAO AND THE WALL

Over the centuries, China's turbulent history has left its mark on this iconic monument, yet no era had as great an impact as Chairman Mao's Communist revolution. In the early years of his rule, Mao led the Long March (a year-long trek to evade the Kuomintang) and wrote *Mount Liupan*, a poem which included the line, "Those who fail to reach the Great Wall are not true men."

However, like many of Mao's original proclamations and treaties, his view of his nation's most revered structure soon changed. China was a poor country, and one that had struggled to rebuild its economy from the ravages of war, invasion and civil fragmentation so the wall transcended from historical symbol to economical fuel source. During the Cultural Revolution (1966-76), the Red Guard began systematically tearing parts of the wall down, deeming it an unneeded trope of the past. Chinese citizens were even urged to take parts of the stone and use them to reinforce their homes.

Today, around 30 per cent of the wall has been lost, and while centuries of erosion and conflict have contributed to this figure, the Cultural Revolution's cannibalistic treatment is seen as one of the most severe contributors.



With over ten million visitors every year, the Great Wall forms a vital part of Chinese tourism – but at what cost to the site's overall health?

tourist attraction, it lures over 10 million visitors every year forming a linchpin in the fabric of the modern Chinese economy.

Yet for all this significance, the Great Wall of China is disappearing – and at a startling rate, too. As of 2015, a third of the Great Wall has been completely lost. "In terms of natural damage, the wall – in my opinion – is actually in pretty decent shape," says Wild China tour guide, Chris Che. "The biggest issue I've found is some of the original materials used, many of which predate something as sturdy and long-lasting as concrete, have begun to degrade. So when you walk along the wall, you can actually feel it swaying and shifting. So it's solid, but not necessarily static."

With the Great Wall serving such a pivotal role in China's modern tourism trade, where does that leave the wall and future plans for conservation? For the government, the sheer feat of maintaining such a vast monument is a daring one at best. So in order to better manage the issue, the government has instead chosen to focus on a roughly 600-kilometre stretch that lies within Beijing territory. Since this is the area that is specifically used for guided tourist trips, the government is able to maintain these sections on a smaller scale.

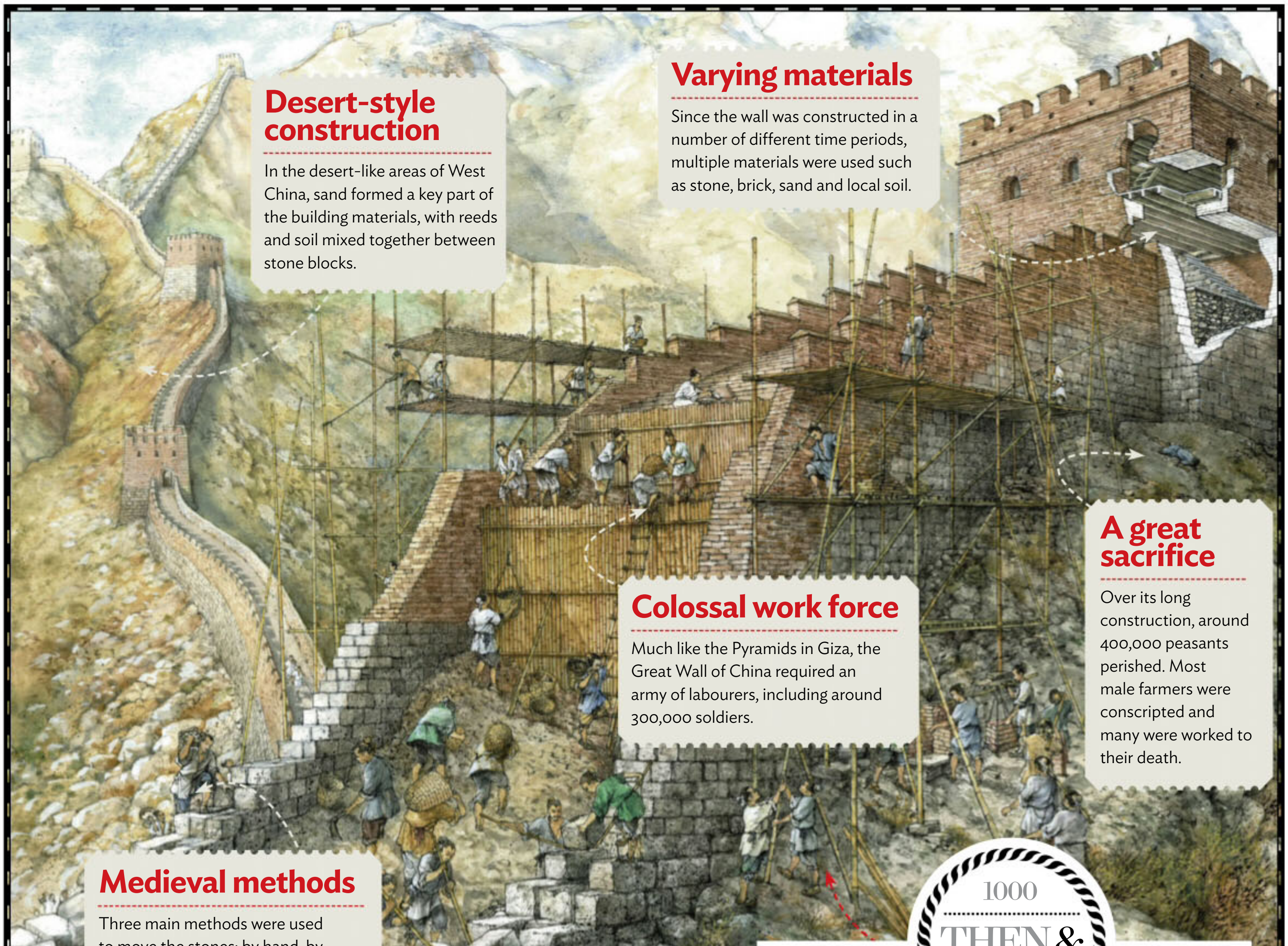
"It directs money to retain the historical value of this area with restoration projects, but as for the rest of the wall, the government has deemed it the 'Wild Great Wall' and made it illegal to walk along these areas," reveals Che. Other areas have been completely submerged in sand dunes, while some sections (especially those that used mud to hold its stone together) have completely disintegrated due to the continual change in temperature caused by freezing and reheating. "There are many places that have been restored and are safe for tourists," says Man on the subject. "The main one is Badaling, outside Beijing. But not far from all these spots, walkers can see gaps and fallen masonry. Notices and barbed wire deter tourists, but adventurers like exploring these bits of the 'Wild Wall.'"

"The government uses regulations and policies to provide legal protection for the wall, but in reality it's very difficult to coordinate a long term solution," adds Che. "So we have a lot of volunteer projects that help clear up trash and we have teams who visit local communities

ABOVE Local governments have very limited funding with which to repair the crumbling structure

BELOW An image of the wall taken in the 19th century, before it was a popular tourist destination and before most restoration work had begun

"When you walk along the wall, you can actually feel it swaying and shifting"



Desert-style construction

In the desert-like areas of West China, sand formed a key part of the building materials, with reeds and soil mixed together between stone blocks.

Varying materials

Since the wall was constructed in a number of different time periods, multiple materials were used such as stone, brick, sand and local soil.

A great sacrifice

Over its long construction, around 400,000 peasants perished. Most male farmers were conscripted and many were worked to their death.

Colossal work force

Much like the Pyramids in Giza, the Great Wall of China required an army of labourers, including around 300,000 soldiers.

Medieval methods

Three main methods were used to move the stones: by hand, by wheelbarrow and on carts pulled by oxen. Camels were even used at times.

Restoration or rebuilding?

Like any monument of national pride, the Great Wall of China remains a symbol of an enduring history etched upon the Earth, and one that's reached a level of global status on a par with the Pyramids at Giza. As such, the preservation of that history has become both a domestic and an international issue, but just how faithful are these attempts at restoration? And by the very act of reconstruction are we replacing that history with a far more modern mark?

That's the question that has dogged the many efforts to restore the wall since the early years of the 20th century, but simply recreating the conditions and the methods used over 1,000 years ago has proved the most difficult. Engineers of the age used the materials most readily available to them at the time – sand, local soil, brick and wood – and while some of these materials proved enduring, many contemporary restoration projects have, in part, used far more recognisable replacements.

Ideally, we need to find a balance between materials that will reinforce the wall for generations, while honouring the methods of wall-building used in its original creation. Since the wall has received far more visitors in the last century than in the rest of its history combined, many people see such compromises as necessary.

1000 THEN & NOW

ABOVE As thousands of years have passed, similar techniques are used but materials often differ when restoring the wall

with the aim of educating them against practices such as charging tourists to cross their land to reach the wall. There are also independent organisations, such as the International Friends of the Great Wall, who are working to find ways to restore sections of the wall and advise tourists of its plight."

On 20 September 2006 the Chinese State Council introduced a set of new laws to regulate conduct on the wall. However, even with fines as high as £53,000 (US$77,000) to discourage people from defacing the wall, Chinese authorities have struggled to find a way to properly police them so far. "There is no specific organisation to enforce the rules," commented Jia Hailin, director of the cultural relics protection department at the Jinshanling Great Wall scenic area in Hebei province while speaking to China's state-linked *Global Times* newspaper. "Damage [can] only be reported to higher authorities and it is hard to solve when it [happens] on the border of two provinces."

For centuries, Chinese citizens have also been removing stones from the wall to help build or reinforce their homes – a policy that was even publicly endorsed by Chairman Mao during the Cultural Revolution – while a micro-industry in itself has emerged where parts of the wall are removed to be sold on as souvenirs by traders.

The Great Wall is far from alone – many people want to see it preserved for future generations. Alongside the Chinese laws in place to protect it, there are also plenty of charity initiatives in place, doing everything from organising clean-up efforts to projects to restore and reinforce those parts of the wall that are in dire straits. Heritage trust UNESCO lists the Great Wall of China as part of its World Heritage Sites, with the agency currently working with the Chinese government to help educate tourists and locals about the importance of preserving the structure for generations to come.

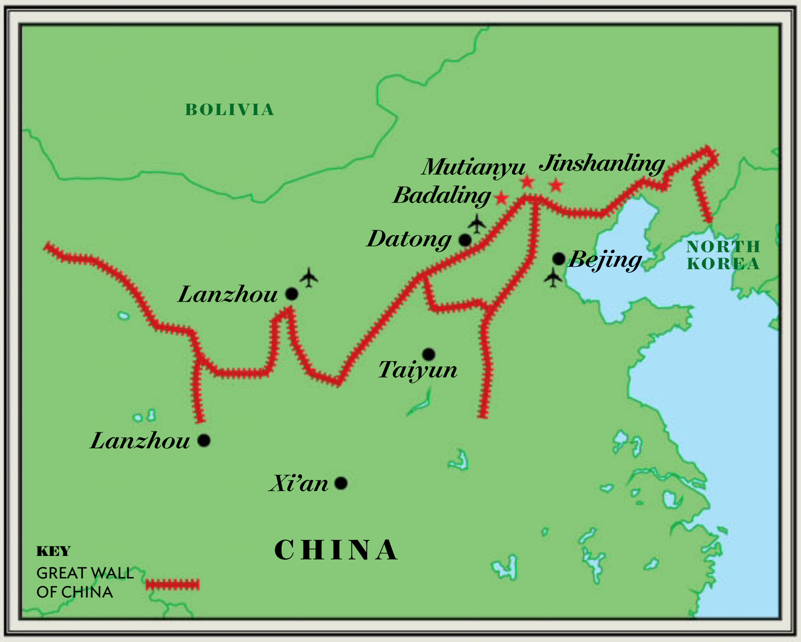
Conservation plans are also underway in Inner Mongolia. Back in January of this year, the autonomous Chinese state announced a new five-year plan to evaluate, restore and protect the 7,000 kilometres of wall that lies within its borders. It aims to give that expanse of the Great Wall a new lease of life by 2020, and its plans have clearly helped bolster efforts elsewhere.

Organisations such as Abroad China also aim to improve conditions along the wall with volunteer cleaning efforts that see groups from across the world come together to help maintain the structure and learn more about its incredible heritage. Activities on their five-day trip include cleaning graffiti left by tourists and locals, removing litter and helping to repair sections of the Great Wall.

Initiatives like this one demonstrate the appetite for saving the wall, something that will hopefully gain momentum in years to come. Visiting the wall needn't be a threat and as long as tourism remains respectful and the various bodies involved with ensuring the protection of the wall continue to battle for its survival, we can save this historic icon for generations to come.

GREAT WALL OF CHINA

EXPLORER'S ESSENTIALS



Essential information

Where The Great Wall of China stretches across northern China and south Mongolia, and is made up of many individual sections. The most popular sections for visitors are in Jinshanling in the east, Badaling in the west, and Mutianyu, which is close to Beijing. For a peaceful section, try Huanghuacheng. Many volunteer trips take place near Beijing.

When to visit Autumn (September to November) may be the best time to visit for many, with cool and clear weather on much of the wall. Visits in summer will be very hot and crowded in the popular areas, while winter can be tough-going due to sub-zero temperatures and snow.

Time zone UTC +8:00

Currency Renminbi

Organisations to contact

International Friends of the Great Wall
One of the biggest and oldest independent organisations for the preservation of the Great Wall, the International Friends of the Great Wall deals with the spread of information regarding the wall's condition and projects to repair it. The society works with China's State Administration of Cultural Heritage to help oversee the wall's condition. Through WildWall, they run regular volunteer trips. Email ***william@wildwall.com*** or visit the WildWall Facebook page for trip details.

Abroad China
Abroad China's 'Clean the Great Wall of China' initiative is a conservation project that's looking for new volunteers to help clean and rebuild sections of the iconic structure. As well as helping out in reconstruction efforts, there will also be opportunities to hike sections of the wall, providing incredible views and a once-in-a-lifetime experience. There will also be seminars held with local experts on the history and cultural significance of the Great Wall. Visit ***www.abroadchina.net*** for more information.

Bespoke trips
Countless charities based both in the UK and internationally organise trips to the Great Wall every year, some of which involve helping out with certain cleanup or restoration efforts. However, keep in mind that these volunteer projects are usually quite expensive to take part in if you're looking to do something in your gap year or beyond. Travel companies such as China Highlights (***www.chinahighlights.com***) also specialise in creating bespoke packages, including hiking both wild and restored areas of the wall.

Links

www.wildchina.com Travel company running tours on the Great Wall and throughout China
whc.unesco.org/en/list/438 The Great Wall's UNESCO history and current information
www.travelchinaguide.com A popular travel company operating across China

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10 TREASURES OF THE Smithsonian National Museum of American History

Find the ten greatest items from American history, with recommendations hand-picked by the museum's own director

MEET THE CURATOR

NAME: JOHN GRAY
Bio: John L Gray is the director for the Smithsonian National Museum of American History, where he develops support for outreach education and scholarship. As steward of the museum's collection of over 3 million artefacts, he is just the person to tell us where to find the highlights.

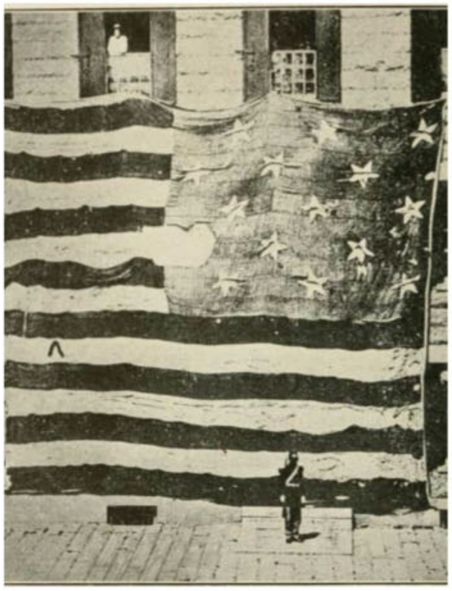
Star-Spangled Banner

LOCATION: **Second Floor, Centre**

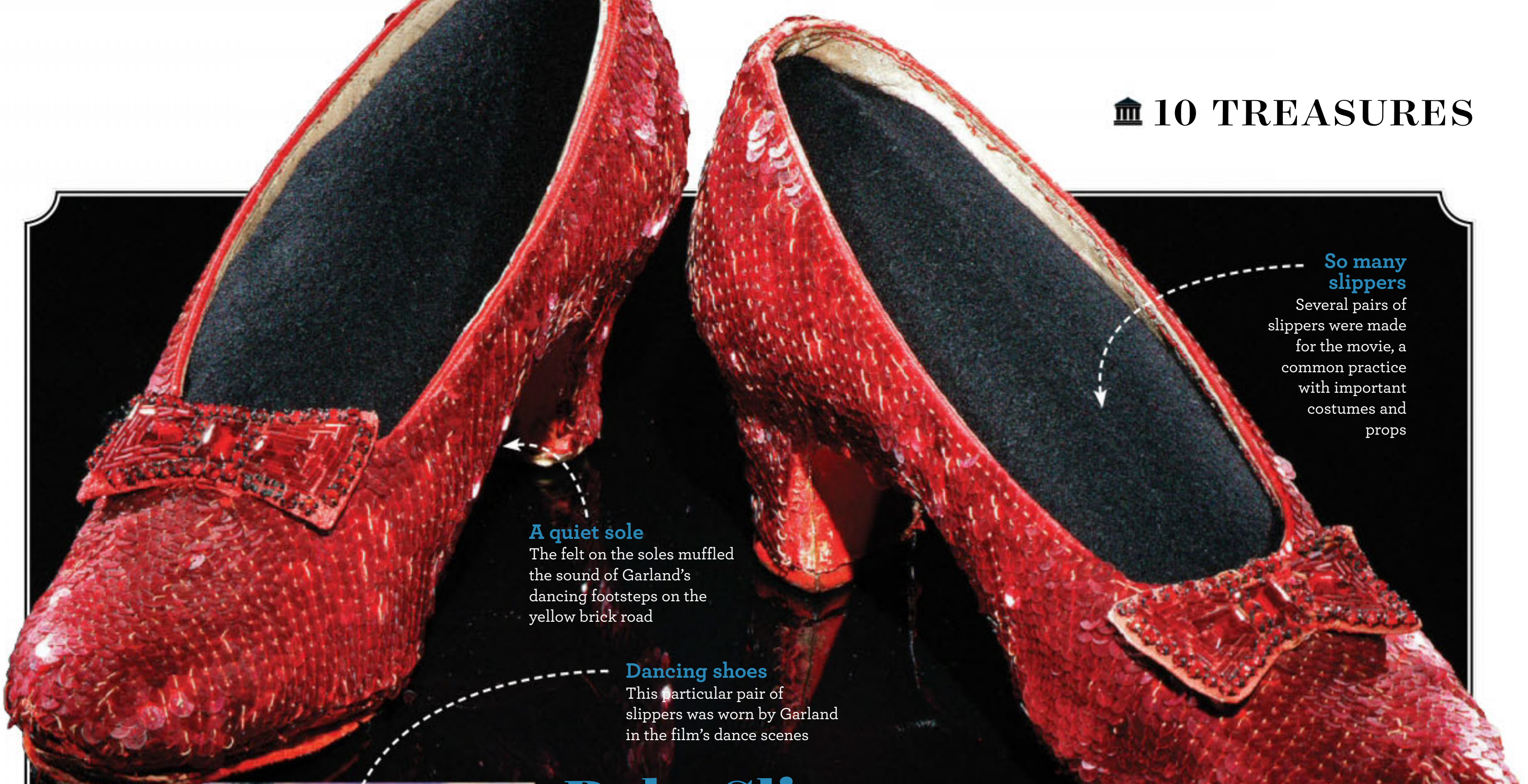
On 14 September 1814, US soldiers at Baltimore's Fort McHenry raised a huge American flag to celebrate a crucial victory over British forces during the War of 1812. The sight of those "broad stripes and bright stars" inspired Francis Scott Key to write a song that would eventually become the national anthem of the United States of America.

John Gray said: "The very idea of our nation's remarkable birth and resilience over so much time is embodied in this simple but monumental flag that inspires every American."

The Smithsonian has been the custodian of the flag since 1907, and it is kept in an environmentally controlled case.



ABOVE The Fort McHenry flag that was raised in 1814, shown here in 1873 at the Boston Navy Yard



So many slippers
Several pairs of slippers were made for the movie, a common practice with important costumes and props

A quiet sole
The felt on the soles muffled the sound of Garland's dancing footsteps on the yellow brick road

Dancing shoes
This particular pair of slippers was worn by Garland in the film's dance scenes

Ruby Slippers

LOCATION: **American Stories Second Floor, East Wing**

The Ruby Slippers were worn by Dorothy Gale, a character played by Judy Garland (1922-69) in the iconic 1939 MGM film of the book by L Frank Baum, *The Wizard of Oz*. They have proven a popular attraction, as Gray remarked, "These iconic and magical slippers are a magnet for our millions of visitors, reminding us all that 'there's no place like home'."

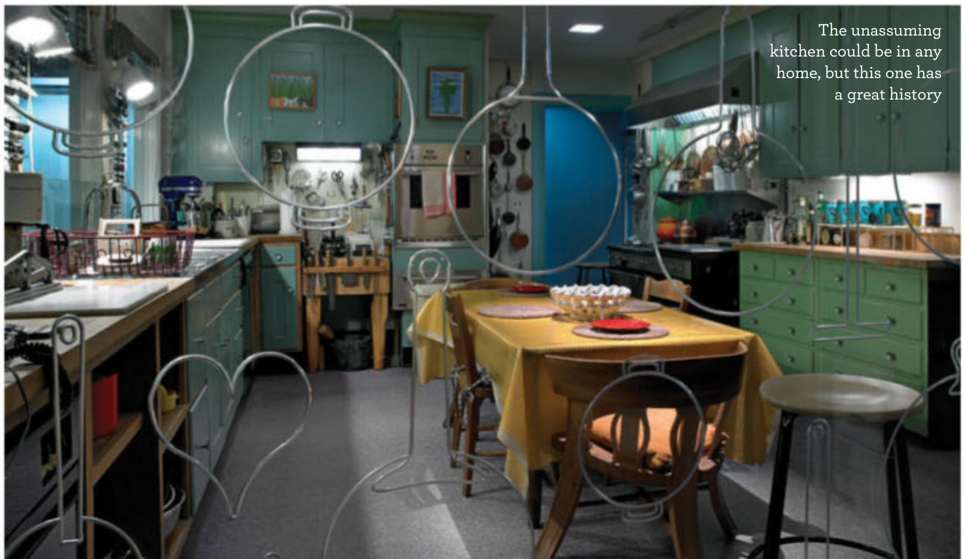
The Ruby Slippers were donated anonymously in 1979, and for over 77 years these slippers have served as an icon of American pop culture.

Julia Child's Kitchen

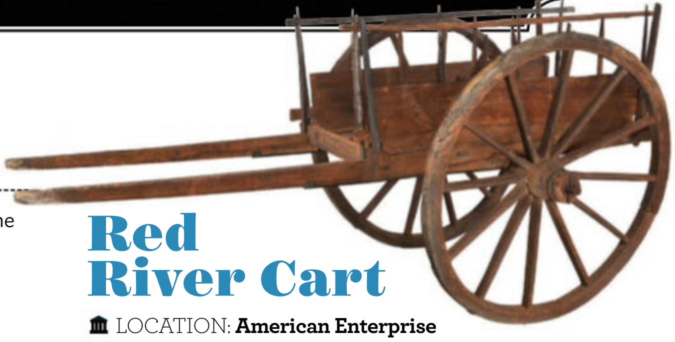
LOCATION: **Food: Transforming the American Table 1950-2000, First Floor, East Wing**

Legendary cook and teacher Julia Child (1912–2004) had a tremendous impact on food and culinary history in the USA. Through her books and television series, which spanned 40 years, she encouraged people to care about food and cooking. She inspired many Americans to conquer their fears of the unfamiliar and to expand their ideas about ingredients and flavours, tools and techniques, and meals in general. Gray said, "Julia opened up our hearts, minds, and stomachs to food of 'others', and in doing so, transformed the American palate. When you gaze upon her rather simple kitchen, there is an immediate sense of nostalgia and belonging."

Julia's kitchen from her Cambridge, Massachusetts, home provides both a starting point and a backdrop for this exhibition on changing foods and foodways in the USA in the second half of the 20th century. It contains tools and equipment from the late 1940s, when Julia Child began her life in food, through to 2001, when she donated this kitchen to the museum.



The unassuming kitchen could be in any home, but this one has a great history



Red River Cart

LOCATION: **American Enterprise First Floor, West Wing**

Fur trading was an extensive international business during the mid-1800s, largely controlled by European organisations but dependent on pelts from suppliers, many of them Native American. Métis (mixed European-American and Indian) women began moving furs and skins along the border between Canada and the US on the Red River trails using carts like this one. As late as 1857, 500 carts brought some $183,000 in furs through the Saint Paul, Minnesota markets for sale in the eastern US.

John Gray's reasons for choosing the item were clear. "The surprising story of how Métis women used these carts to haul their precious cargoes to circumvent the Hudson Bay Monopoly makes this a national treasure. It's a fitting introduction to our new exhibition exploring the history of American business through the tumultuous interaction of capitalism and democracy to achieve the common good."

This Red River Cart was donated in 1882 by Charles Cavileer, an early North Dakota settler.

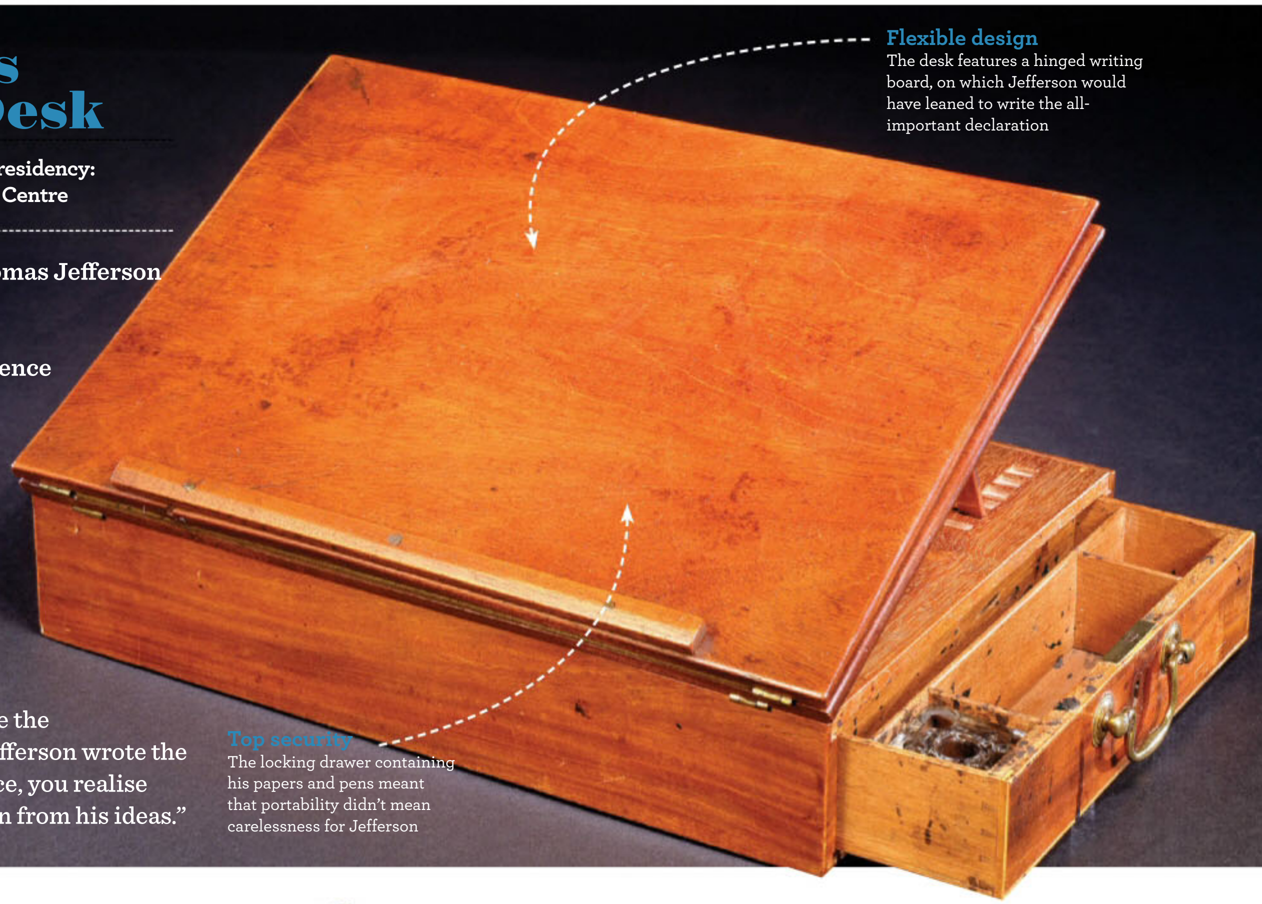
© Alamy

Jefferson's Portable Desk

LOCATION: **The American Presidency: A Glorious Burden, Third Floor, Centre**

In 1776, Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence on this portable lap desk of his own design. The desk was Jefferson's travelling companion through his time as a revolutionary patriot, diplomat and president of the US.

John Gray sees the desk as an embodiment of the man himself: "When you see the ingenious desk on which Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence, you realise you cannot separate the man from his ideas."



Flexible design
The desk features a hinged writing board, on which Jefferson would have leaned to write the all-important declaration

Top security
The locking drawer containing his papers and pens meant that portability didn't mean carelessness for Jefferson

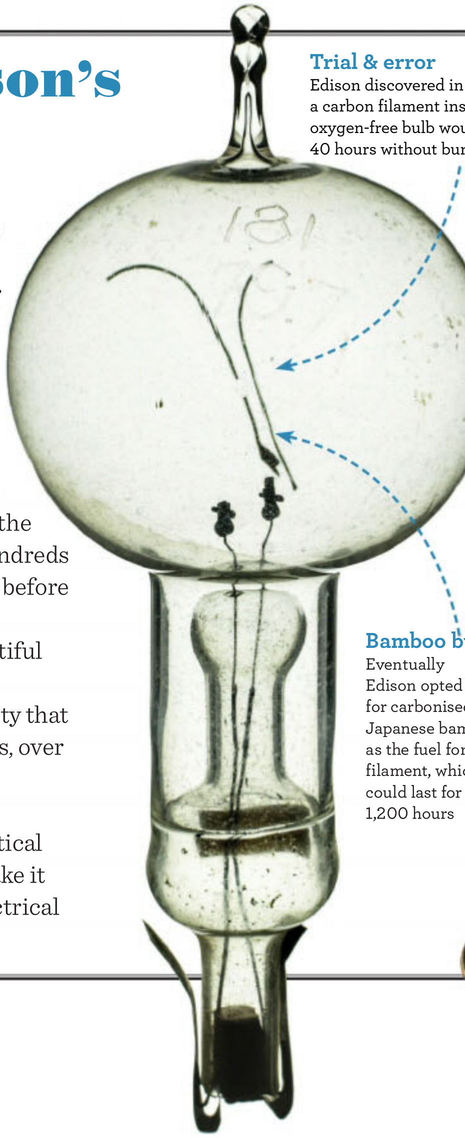
Thomas Edison's Light Bulb

LOCATION: **American Enterprise First Floor, West Wing**

The first public demonstration of electric lighting took place at Edison's Menlo Park, New Jersey, lab on New Year's Eve, 1879. Edison's light bulb was not a simple invention, and he was not the first to work on the concept. He experimented with hundreds of materials for the filament inside before striking onn a winning formula.

John Gray said, "This very beautiful light bulb demonstrates American ingenuity and the needed complexity that gives us innovations and inventions, over and over again."

Edison's improvements on light bulbs made electrical lighting practical and commercially viable, but to make it useful, Edison had to invent an electrical distribution system as well.



Trial & error
Edison discovered in 1879 that a carbon filament inside an oxygen-free bulb would glow for 40 hours without burning out

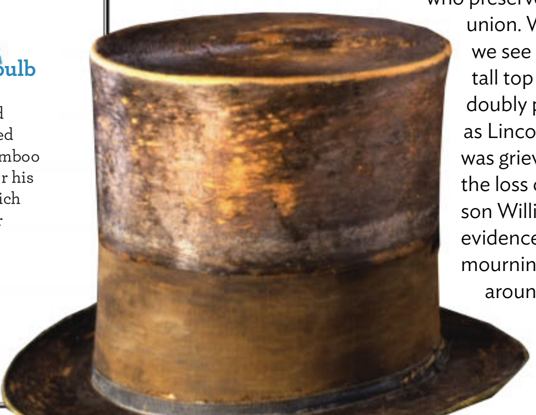
Bamboo bulb
Eventually Edison opted for carbonised Japanese bamboo as the fuel for his filament, which could last for 1,200 hours

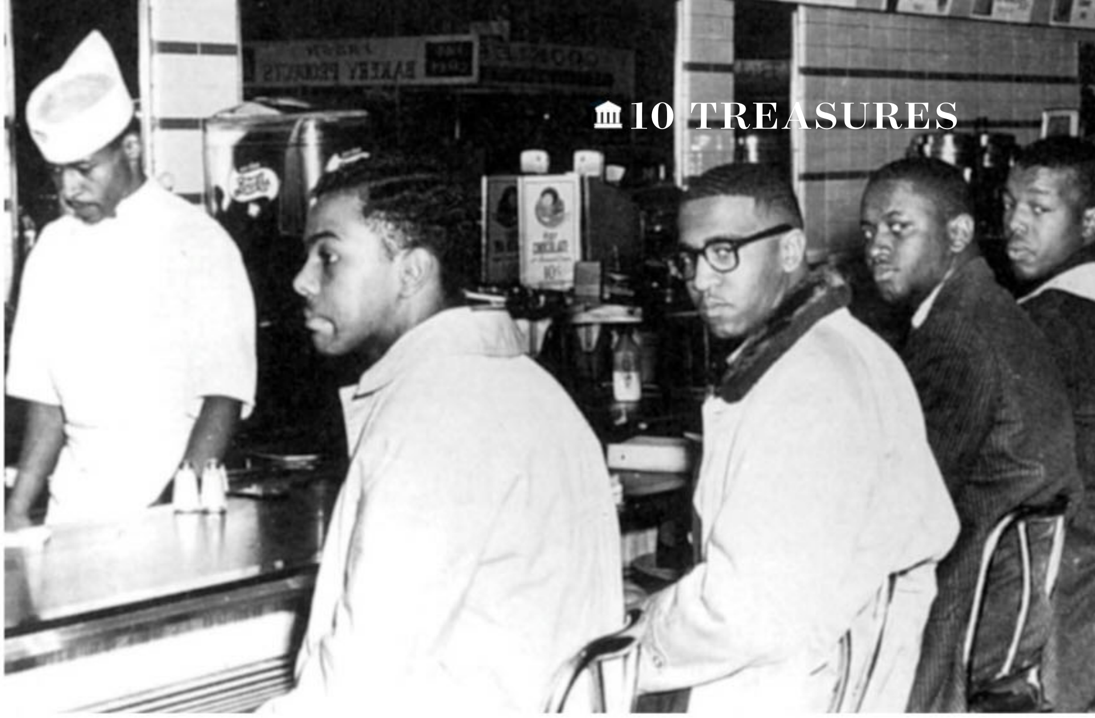
Abraham Lincoln's Top Hat

LOCATION: **The American Presidency: A Glorious Burden, Third Floor, Centre**

Objects owned by or associated with Abraham Lincoln quickly became relics, reminding Americans of Lincoln's greatness and challenging them to keep his ideals alive. One of the Smithsonian Institution's most treasured icons is this top hat, worn by Lincoln to Ford's Theatre on the night of his assassination, 15 April 1865.

Gray chose this artefact because, "We relive both the triumph and the unbelievable suffering of our nation that withstood a nearly cataclysmic civil war and a heart-rending assassination of the president who preserved the union. When we see this very tall top hat, it's doubly poignant, as Lincoln himself was grieving the loss of his son Willie as evidenced by the mourning band around his hat."





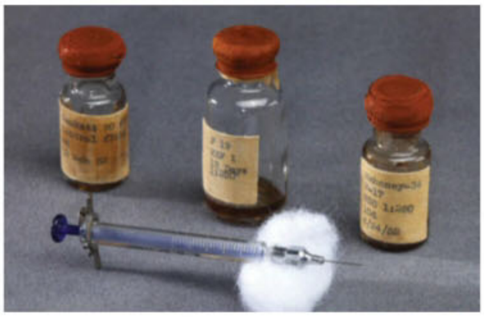
Jonas Salk's Polio Vaccine

LOCATION: **American Stories, Second Floor, East Wing**

Although Jonas Salk's polio vaccine promised to eradicate one of the most feared diseases of the early-20th century, its acceptance was hardly easy. Many people feared catching the disease from the vaccine and, in fact, poor quality control by one of the manufacturers in the 1950s led to the infection of about 200 children. Others worried about the role of the federal government in administering the vaccine. The museum holds vaccine bottles and a 5-cc syringe used by Salk in the 1954-55 vaccine trials.

Gray stated, "This small vial represents a medical miracle, a scientific legacy and the USA's unstinting belief in the power of medicine and science. Our museum's remarkable collection of medical and scientific artefacts is one of our many strengths."

Today, polio vaccines have eliminated the paralysing disease throughout most of the world.

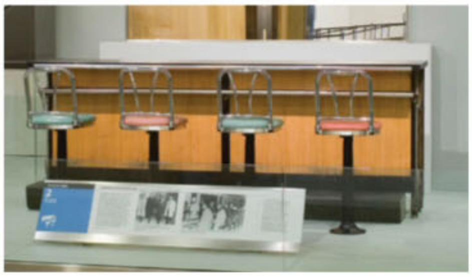


Greensboro Lunch Counter

LOCATION: **Second Floor, East Wing**

This section of the Woolworth's lunch counter with four stools from Greensboro, North Carolina, represents the sit-in that challenged segregated eating places. On 1 February 1960, four African-American students – Ezell A Blair Jr (now Jibreel Khazan), Franklin E McCain, Joseph A McNeil and David L Richmond – sat down at this counter and politely asked for service. Their request was refused. When asked to leave, they remained in their seats. They were all enrolled at the North Carolina Agricultural and Technical College. Their "passive sit-down demand" began one of the first sustained sit-ins and ignited a youth-led movement to challenge injustice and racial inequality throughout the south.

"This lunch counter takes us back in a visceral way to a painful time in our history when the colour of your skin dictated every aspect of your life and demonstrates the progress that we have made towards the American ideals of freedom and equality," said Gray on choosing this item.

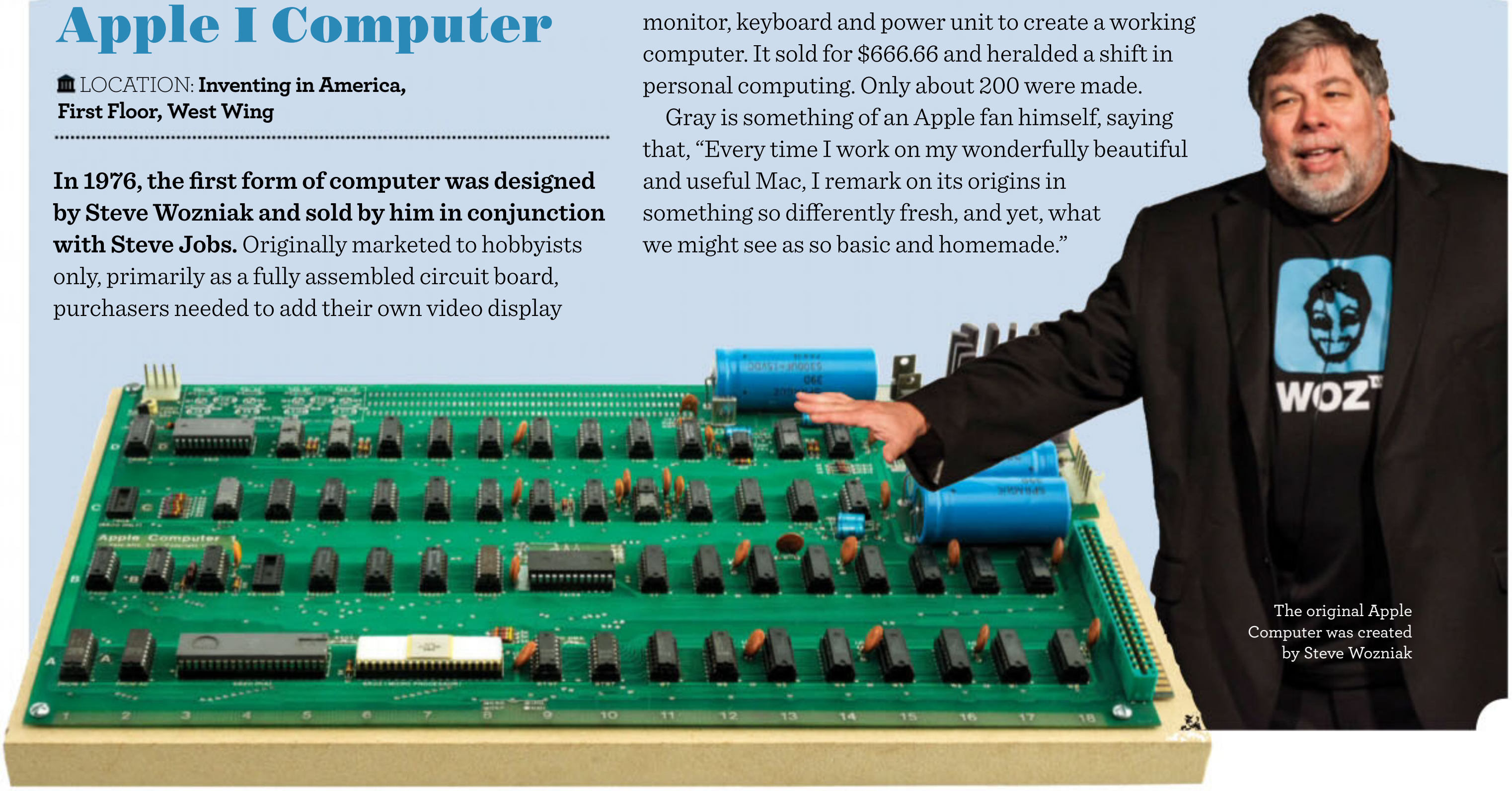


Apple I Computer

LOCATION: **Inventing in America, First Floor, West Wing**

In 1976, the first form of computer was designed by Steve Wozniak and sold by him in conjunction with Steve Jobs. Originally marketed to hobbyists only, primarily as a fully assembled circuit board, purchasers needed to add their own video display monitor, keyboard and power unit to create a working computer. It sold for $666.66 and heralded a shift in personal computing. Only about 200 were made.

Gray is something of an Apple fan himself, saying that, "Every time I work on my wonderfully beautiful and useful Mac, I remark on its origins in something so differently fresh, and yet, what we might see as so basic and homemade."



The original Apple Computer was created by Steve Wozniak

© Alamy

CITY GUIDE TO

19TH CENTURY PRAGUE

Step into a city rife with revolution as you explore places and experiences that tell the story of Prague in the 1800s

19TH CENTURY PRAGUE

WORDS BY ALEX HOSKINS

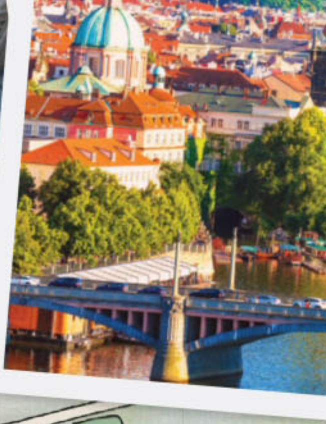
CZECH REPUBLIC
PRAGUE

The view doesn't seem to have changed very much, but look closely and you can see additions to the castle complex and cathedral

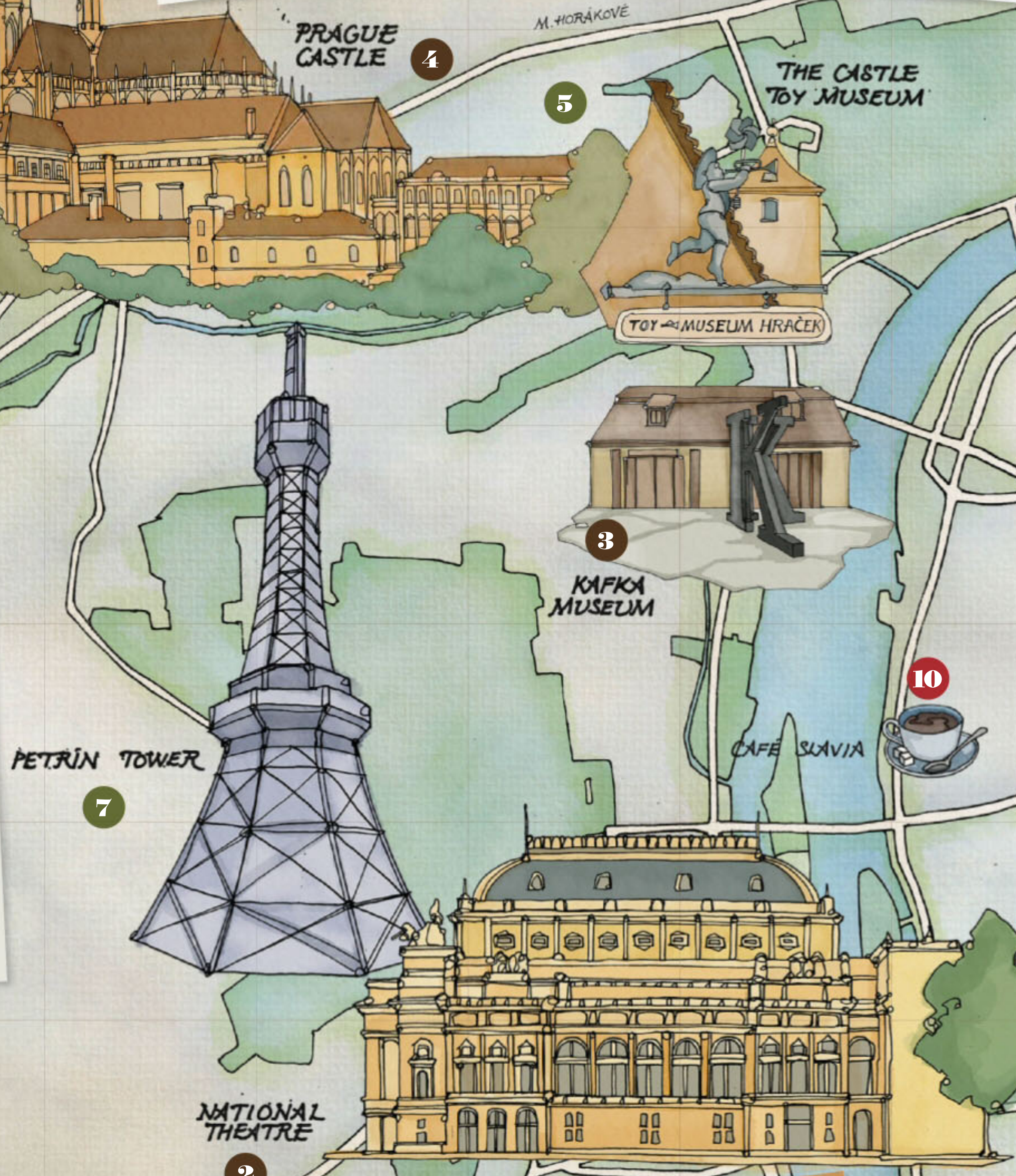
The city of Prague's exciting and varied history is impossible to ignore as you walk along its cobbled streets and wander among its colourful buildings. It remained largely untouched through two World Wars and the winding streets, orange rooftops and famous 'thousand spires' combine to make a city that you can't stop photographing.

One period of Prague's history that gave us a wealth of not only Czech architecture but also Czech national identity, was the 19th century. In the middle of the 1800s, between March 1848 and November 1849, several uprisings took place, as Czech citizens lashed out against the Habsburgs' failure to address provincial issues from their Vienna throne. The protests were suppressed, but the Czech people's resolve could not be.

The Holy Roman Empire was dismantling and the Czech people were dissatisfied with being treated as lower-class citizens. The citizens of Prague spoke German or Czech, a division of language indicative of a division in the country's identity throughout the 19th century. As you'll see from the places that tell this story, Prague went into the 1800s as the long-suffering subject of a distant crown, and came out as a nation of revolution and resolve, achieved largely through the pursuit of culture and art.



MAP OF PRAGUE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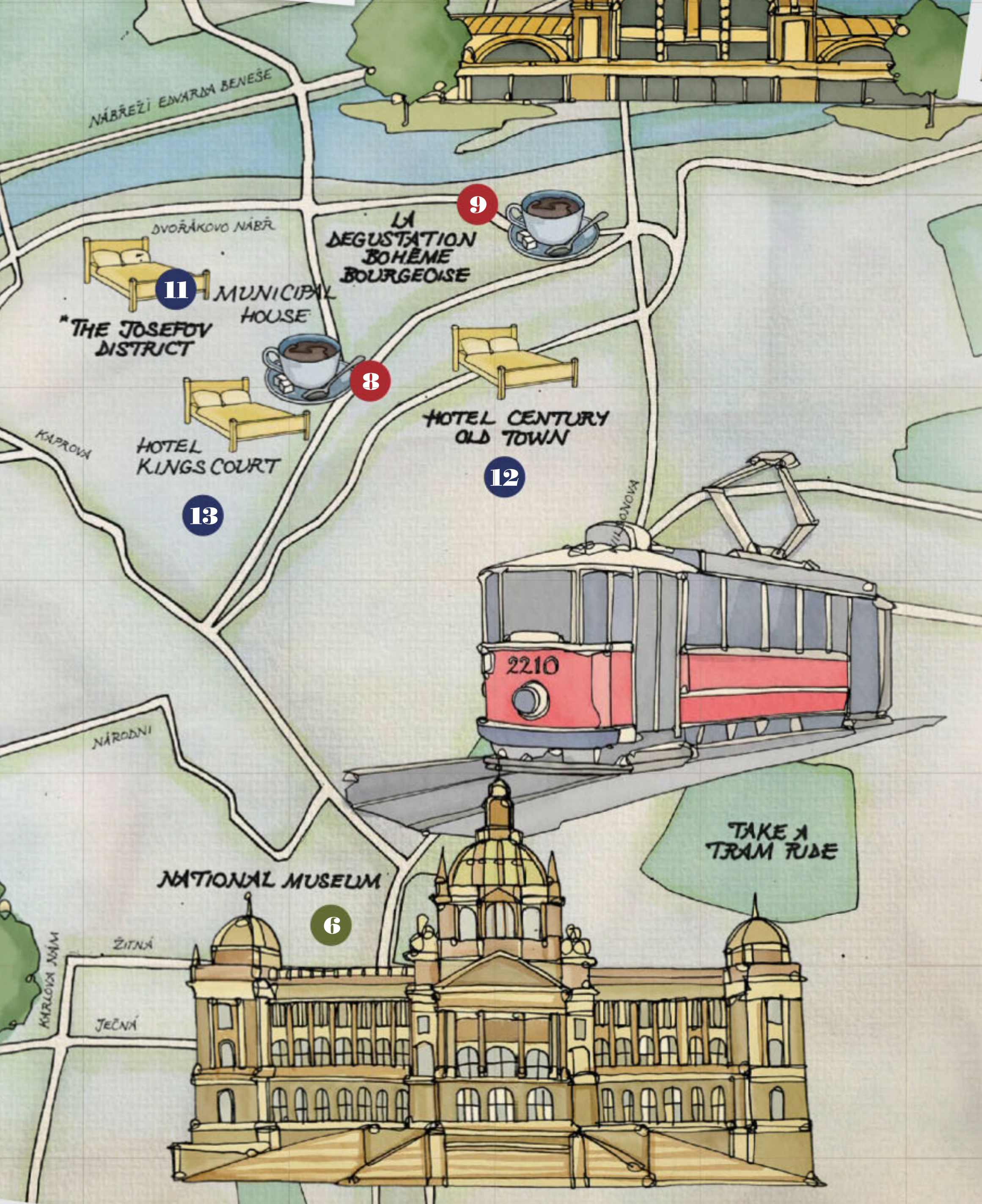
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TAKE A TRAM RIDE

While Prague's iconic trams may not look like a product of the 19th century, with their electric lines and motorised cars, the first trams were drawn by horses and began running in September 1875, with a maximum speed of eight kilometres per hour. The original route took passengers between the Karlín district and the National Theatre (which was under construction at the time). In 1897, the first electric trams came into service, so even on today's trams, you can get a sense of the way that Prague's residents might have travelled around the city at the end of the 19th century.

KEY

- ☕ *Café/Restaurant*
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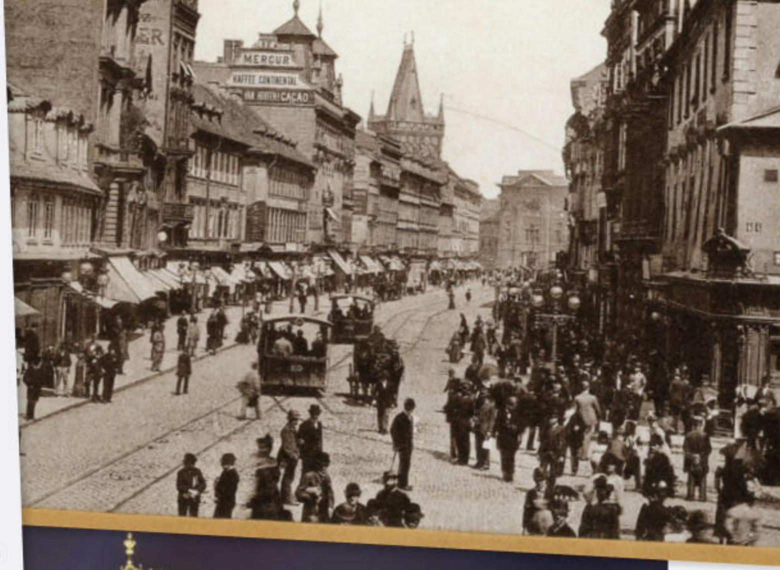
- ● *Things to see*
- ● *Take the family*
- ● *Eat & drink*
- ● *Where to stay*



Things to see

❶ Palace of Industry

Today, this striking building forms the centre of the Prague Exhibition Ground, a name which gives away its main modern usage. But, when it was first built to celebrate the Jubilee Exhibition in 1891, its purpose was somewhat more stately. The Art Nouveau design was the work of architect Bedřich Münzberger and engineer Frantiskem Prasil, and formed an imposing structure made from glass and iron. It was one of the earliest examples of this style of construction in the country, using modern materials for the time.

The palace, located in the Holešovice district's Exhibition Ground, now hosts fairs and other events, including the St Matthew's Fair in spring ('Matějská pout' in Czech), which sees rollercoasters and other attractions dominate the fields close to the palace.

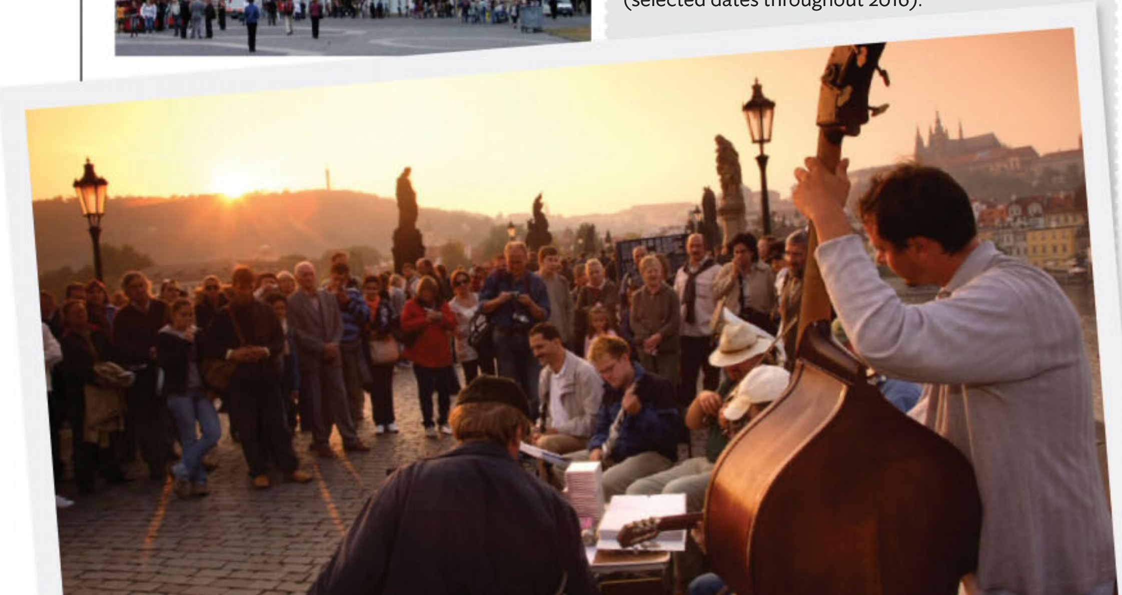
❷ National Theatre

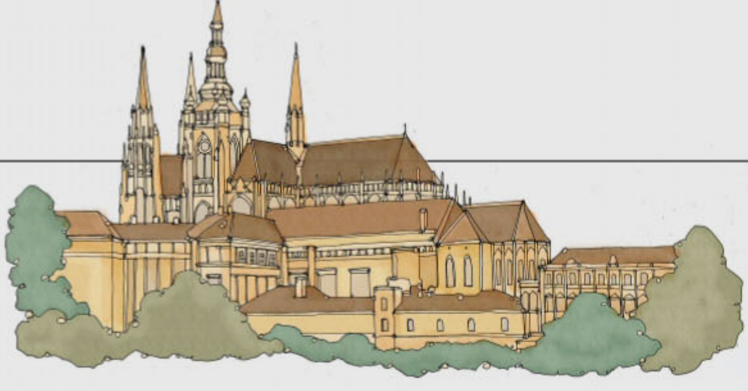
The Prague National Theatre was built on the donations of patriots, looking for ways for Czech culture to bloom in the wake of the uprisings of 1848. As such, it is an excellent example of the flourishing of Czech national pride in the mid-19th century. The building, perched on the bank of the Vltava and built in the neo-Renaissance style was, and still is, more than simply a building – it was somewhere for Czech national identity to be considered, reflected upon and refined. The first play was staged in 1881 in honour of the visiting Prince Rudolf, and today, you can see plays by Shakespeare at the theatre, as well as opera and productions of works by Czech playwrights, such as *The Bagpiper of Strakonice*, by Josef Kajetán Tyl (selected dates throughout 2016).

❸ Kafka Museum

Born in 1833, Franz Kafka's unique style bears all of the hallmarks of his history, location and upbringing. To many, he is the face of Prague. Born into a city finding its own identity, fighting between German and Czech languages and – as well as all of this – being a Jewish writer gave Kafka plenty to think about, and the various forces of identity tugging him in different directions certainly made their presence felt in his paranoid, bureaucracy-obsessed literary works.

The museum dedicated to his life and works captures this beautifully, with gloomy exhibits that bring Kafka's short life into the present. Multimedia exhibits capture the feeling of unease found in Kafka's novels, while a hall of filing cabinets brings to life the mundane oppression of office work that he knew so well. Most of Kafka's working life was spent at an insurance company – his writing was not published until after his death, and against his express wishes.



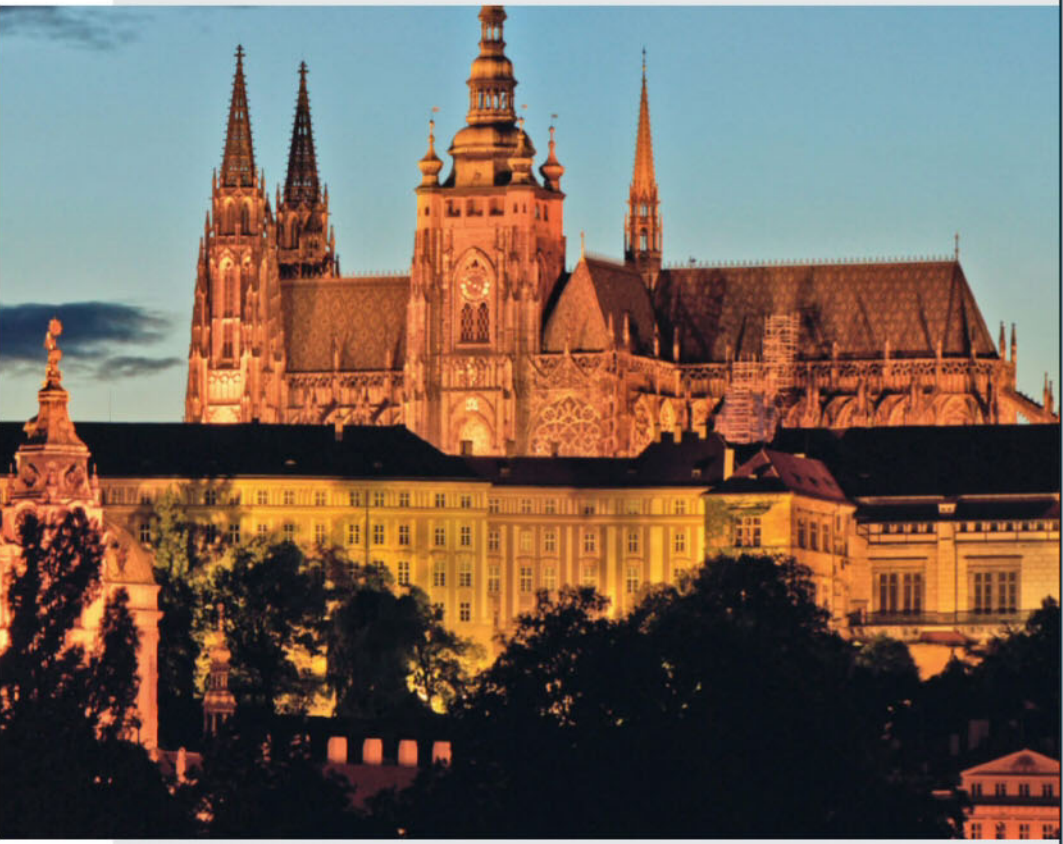


④ PRAGUE CASTLE

Having been the chosen home of many Bohemian monarchs, and with myriad periods of intermittent disrepair, looting and rebuilding, Prague Castle was updated and renovated in the baroque style by Empress Maria Theresa in the late 18th century. During the 19th century, its main use was as a home for Ferdinand I of Austria (also known as Ferdinand V), the former emperor of the Habsburg-Lorraine dynasty, encouraged to abdicate because of severe epilepsy and further neurological and physical problems (likely caused by the genetic closeness of his parents). He was the last to be crowned with the title of King of Bohemia at Prague Castle in 1836, and also held the titles of King of Hungary, King of Austria and King of Lombardy and Venetia.

Ferdinand abdicated in December 1848 and chose Prague Castle as his home for the rest of his life. Earlier in this year, the Prague Slavic Congress brought to a head the tensions that had been brewing over centuries of outside rule. The tensions between classes did not extend in malice towards Ferdinand, however, as he was latterly known as Ferdinand the Benign, and himself considered Prague his home, rather than the court of Vienna.

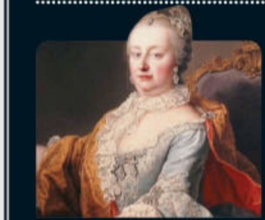
One of the most notable changes from the time is the Chapel of the Holy Cross, which was remodelled in a Classicist style for Ferdinand I, from its original Baroque style. It now houses a permanent exhibition of treasures from the castle and cathedral, and is seen in the second courtyard as you enter the castle, heading towards the cathedral.



ABOVE It can be confusing to differentiate the castle from the cathedral in the mammoth castle complex. St Vitus Cathedral is located within the castle ramparts on the hill

How the Habsburg Dynasty left their mark on Prague

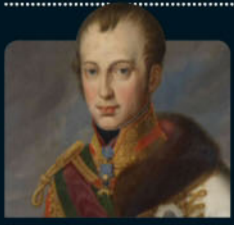
Originating from the castle Habsburg (or 'hawk's castle') in modern-day Switzerland, the Habsburgs were a prominent royal dynasty active in Europe for some 500 years. The house that ruled over the Czech people of the 19th century was known as the Habsburg-Lorraine line, to mark the nuptials of Maria Theresa (who would later become empress) and Francis of Lorraine in 1736. Austria, Hungary and Bohemia (which included the modern-day Czech Republic) were all key regions ruled by the Habsburg dynasty.



Empress Maria Theresa

Reign: 1740-1780

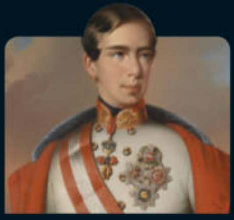
Maria Theresa was the Empress of the Holy Roman Empire and queen towards the end of the 18th century. Her accession was marred by the War of the Austrian Succession, which challenged her claim to the Habsburg throne, as France supported a claim by Bavaria, Saxony and Spain in order to destabilise their Austrian enemy. Maria Theresa remodelled a large amount of Prague Castle in the fashion of the time.



Ferdinand I of Austria (Ferdinand V)

Reign: 1835-1848

As the eldest son of Maria Theresa and Holy Roman emperor Francis II, Ferdinand was named as the heir to the Habsburg throne despite suffering from severe epilepsy and other disorders. As such, a body of counsellors known as the State Conference handled government affairs for him, and the revolutions of 1848 were not largely aimed at Ferdinand but at these advisers. When Ferdinand abdicated in December 1848, his nephew Franz Joseph succeeded him.

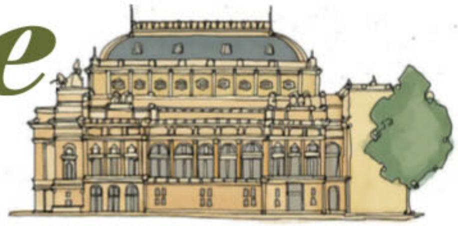


Franz Joseph

Reign: 1848-1916

Franz Joseph served with Austrian forces in 1848 in Italy during the rebellion of Lombardy-Venetia against Austrian rule. The early part of his reign was associated with neo-absolutism, as Franz Joseph actively joined his advisers to take a personal role in the empire's affairs. His reign was littered with negotiations and dissatisfaction from the Hungarian, Czech and other Slavic people. The Czech people still fought for recognition and this affected foreign and domestic policy.

Take the family



TOY MUSEUM HRAČEK

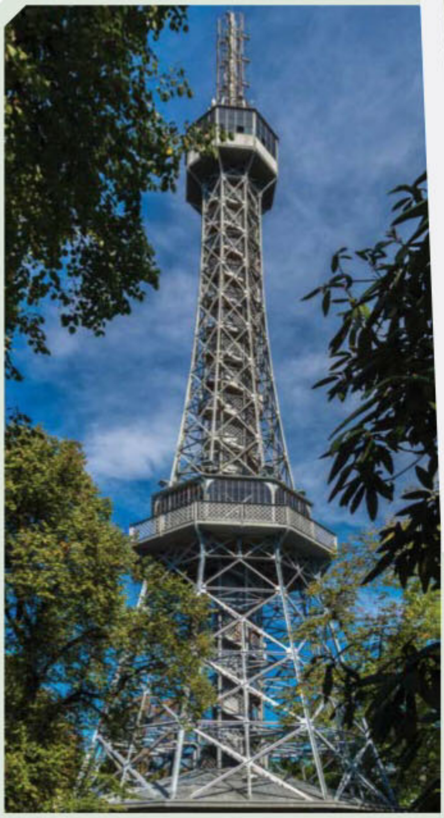
⑤ The Castle Toy Museum

Said to be the second largest toy museum in the world, the Prague Toy Museum is nestled within the ramparts of the castle, close to the idyllic cobbled street known as Golden Lane. Most of the collection's exhibits range from the 18th to the 20th centuries across the world. Inside you'll find 19th century trains, a selection of teddy bears from throughout history, Action Man toys and a whole floor of Barbie dolls.

⑥ National Museum

The Prague National Museum was one of the first organisations to be established in the 19th century as part of the country's aspirations to make their way as an independent nation with a distinct culture. Originally established in 1818, the collection first resided in the Monastery of St Jakub and in private flats. It then moved through various different buildings until the idea of a specific building was accepted and a piece of land became available at the top of Wenceslas Square in 1876. Finally, in July 1885, the digging of the foundations began.

The main building is currently closed for reconstruction until 2018. However, the collection, which includes natural history as well as Czech history exhibits, is still available for visitors, and is currently being housed in alternative buildings.



⑦ Petřín Tower & Mirror Maze

Petřín Tower is visible through much of the city and its similarity to the Eiffel Tower is immediately striking (and was certainly intentional). Like the Palace of Industry, it was constructed in 1891 for the Jubilee Exhibition, and while the structure itself stands at some 64 metres tall, its position at the top of Petřín hill adds an impressive 318 extra metres to the overall height.

The 299 stairs to the top are not as gruelling as they first appear, but if you have also walked up Petřín Hill beforehand, your legs (and the legs of little ones) might welcome the lift that is offered for an extra fee. The alternative route up the hill itself is the funicular railway (built in 1890), which departs from Újezd tram stop and will take you to the peak. Sights to spot from the top include Prague Castle, Charles Bridge and the Strahov Stadium.

Inside the tower, you'll also find a mirror maze, an eternally fun activity where visitors of all ages can enjoy their distorted appearance.

Eat & drink

8 Municipal House

The cafe on the ground floor of Prague's Municipal House is part of a building which, while built in the 1920s, upholds to this day the values born out of the National Revival. It's also one of the best places to sample traditional Viennese coffee and patisserie.

The luxurious cafe is adorned with chandeliers and benefits from its Art Nouveau credentials, the building having been worked on by, among others, one of Prague's favourite sons, Alfons Mucha.

9 La Degustation Bohême Bourgeoise

This upmarket restaurant is certainly one for those with plenty of crowns to splash on eating in the Czech capital, but it does offer a unique twist on 19th century cuisine. Its menu includes a tasting menu inspired by a traditional Czech cookery book dating from 1894 called *Kuchařská škola* (which translates to 'cooking school') by Marie B Svobodová, but the food is radically modernised.

10 Café Slavia

Kavarna ('café' in Czech) Slavia is perhaps the best-known and most historic of the traditional Viennese-style coffee houses in Prague, and opened in 1884. The tradition for these caffeinated social spaces flourished in the 19th century, and gave Prague's intellectuals and creatives a place to work, think and relax – some even got their post delivered to their local café.

Notable customers include composer Bedřich Smetana, and later Jiří Kolář and Václav Havel (who would later become the nation's president), while the café was originally associated with Czech dissidents around the time of the National Revival. It is where people would meet to work on their poetry, plays and compositions, discuss politics and organise action.

Its position opposite the National Theatre is no coincidence, as both buildings were part of the revolution in culture; ideas were generated at Kavarna Slavia, then realised at the theatre across the road. The decor was updated for the fashion of the 1920s, but the undeniable history of the café makes it a must-visit when invoking the true spirit of 19th century Prague.

The Czech National Revival

This national movement brought Czech culture and identity back to life

The advances of Napoleon and the confrontations he met with in Germanic countries sparked the idea of nationalism within the Slavic people. Bohemia, like the other nations under the Austro-Hungarian Empire, saw a division between Germanic nobility, and Czech peasants. This class division was reinforced by a language barrier; German was taught and spoken by the intelligentsia and nobility, while Czech was only spoken by rural people and the working classes.

Throughout the late 18th century and early 19th century, an uprising saw Czech language institutions, such as theatres, being built, and two manuscripts were even forged in Czech, claiming to be from the 10th century, to demonstrate the language's intrinsic value. The Czech people also wanted more autonomy from the Austrian crown, or for Czech/Slovak unity to be consolidated. With the upheavals of 1848, they edged closer to the independence they ultimately sought. The coffee houses and buildings of the period were where the Czech people prepared their strategy, and that's part of what makes them so exciting to visit today.

Where to stay

⓫ The Josefov district

Apartments in Josefov are readily available through companies such as Airbnb and Expedia. Hotels including Design Hotel Josef, with its modern design feel, and Hotel Maximilian for a more traditional, classic experience, mean that you can be at the centre of this historic district whatever your travel needs. Aside from its central location, Josefov holds experiences that will help you understand Prague as it stands today.

Full of history of Prague's Jewish community, the atmosphere is respectful of the tragedy the area has seen. In the 13th century, the many Jewish residents of Prague were forced to leave their homes and relocate to this district where they suffered overcrowding and persecution. In 1848, Jews were granted permission to settle outside of the city, and in the 1890s, demolition began that engulfed most of the district. By 1913, just six synagogues, the Old Jewish Town Hall and the Old Cemetery remained.

Today, you can visit sites including the Spanish Synagogue and the Pinkas Synagogue, which bears an emotive tribute to victims of the holocaust. Over 77,000 names of Jewish victims from Bohemia and Moravia are written on the walls of the building, which was built in 1535.

⓬ Hotel Century Old Town

Designed and built between 1894 and 1896, the Hotel Century Old Town was the work of Alfons Wertmüller, who also designed the State Opera and worked on the National Theatre. The 19th century building also has historical links to one of the city's greatest literary figures – Franz Kafka.

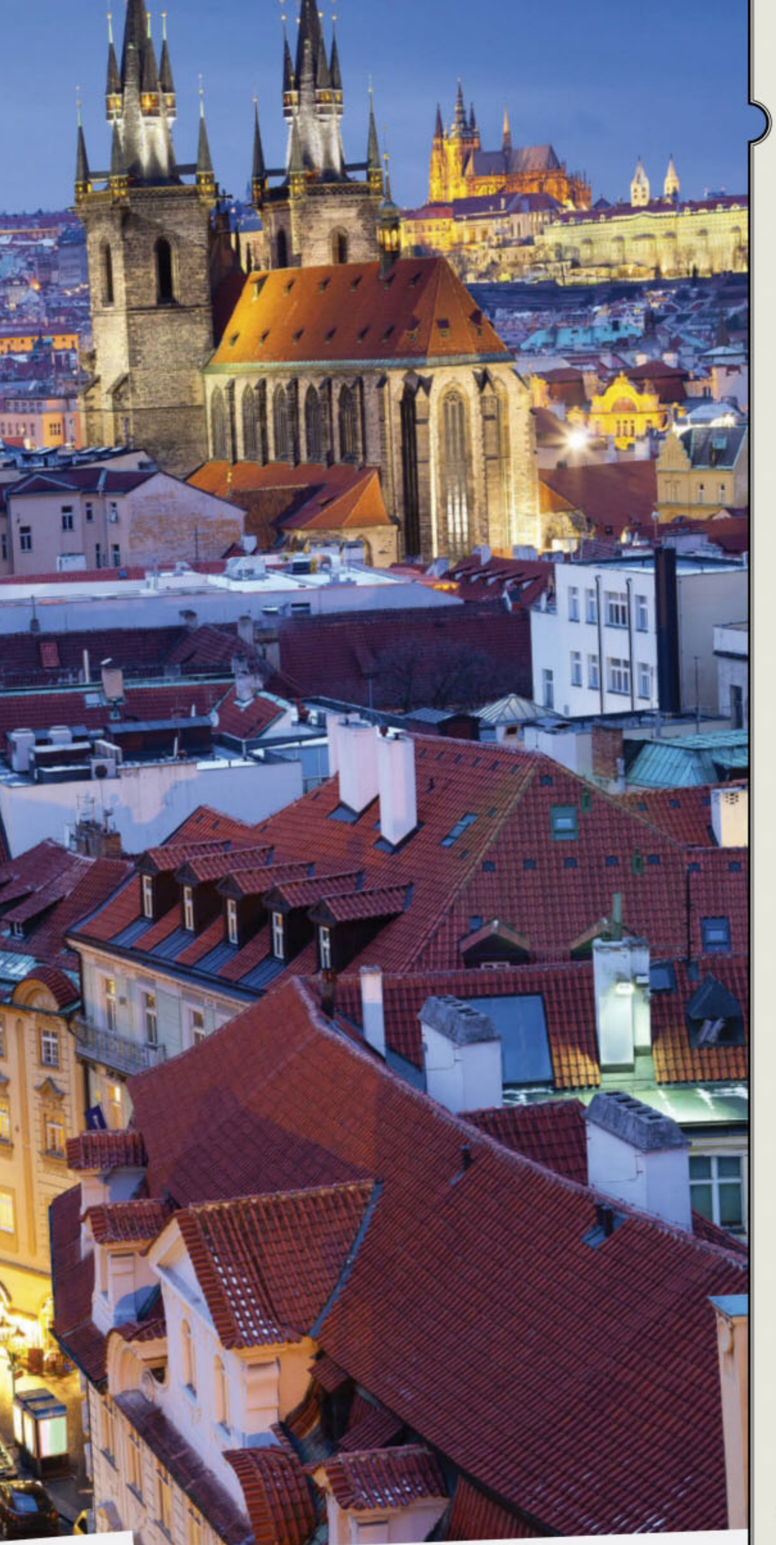
The building was originally erected as the main offices of the Worker's Accident Insurance Institute for the Kingdom of Bohemia, for whom Kafka worked between 1908 and 1922 as a clerk. In fact, his former office is now available to stay in – it's room number 214, and is adorned with photos of the writer and his family, and a large reproduction manuscript.

⓭ Hotel Anna

This cosy hotel is a little further out of the centre than some, in the Vinohrady district. However, the service is worth the walk. The hotel was built as a private residence between 1892 and 1895 and combines a Neo-Classical facade with Art Nouveau interiors, which have been preserved as far as possible.

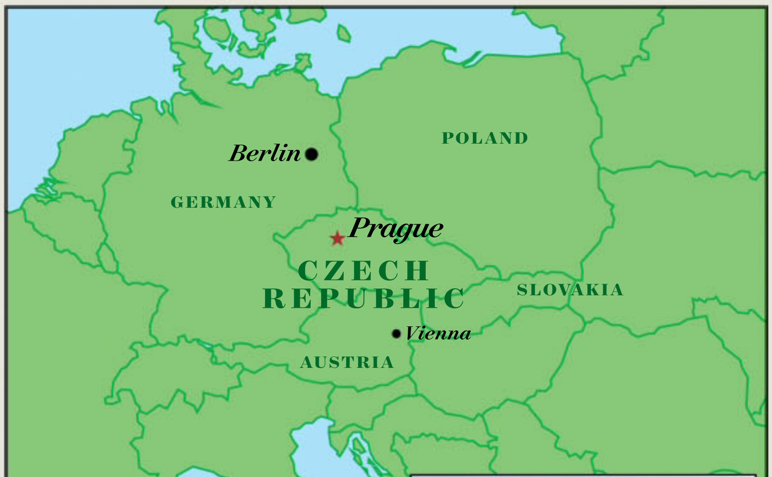
PRAHA. Židovská synagoga

Pilsner Urquell



19TH CENTURY PRAGUE

EXPLORER'S ESSENTIALS



Essential information

Where Located fairly centrally within the Czech Republic, in central Europe, Prague is the capital city of the country. The airport that serves the city is Václav Havel Airport, and transfers by taxi take roughly half an hour. There is also a bus that serves the route from the city centre to the airport. Hotels, food and goods are generally inexpensive, thought there's something for all budgets to enjoy in the city.

Split into districts, the main areas of the city centre are the old and new towns, which are separated by the Vlatav river which flows between them. There are several famous and beautiful bridges across the river.

When to visit Prague is beautiful year-round, whether you are looking for a chilly winter break (snow is not uncommon between December and February, which are Prague's least-visited months), or a summer escape, when temperatures average around 18 degrees Celsius.

Time zone UTC +2:00

Currency Czech koruna

Links

www.pragueexperience.com A comprehensive and useful guide to Prague's attractions

www.czechtourism.com/a/prague/ Website of the official Czech tourist board

whc.unesco.org/en/list/616 UNESCO history and current information for Prague

Need to know

Tickets for tram rides
If you decide to use the city's iconic trams, avoid fines by making sure you validate your ticket (purchased from corner shops and, less frequently, vending machines at the stations) on entering the tram, using a stamping device near the door.

Smoking indoors
At the time of writing, it is legal to smoke tobacco inside Czech pubs and restaurants. Excellent news if you are a smoker, but if you'd rather avoid it, many restaurants have no-smoking areas, and try to eat in restaurants rather than bars.

Day trips
There are plenty of exciting day trips to be taken from Prague into lesser-known towns nearby, including Olomouc (around 2.5 hours by train). The nearby Karlstejn Castle is just 45 minutes by train, and dates back to the 12th century.

⑭ Hotel Kings Court

Hotel Kings Court, built in the 19th century, is a neo-Renaissance-style building which has been fully updated with a modern, luxurious finish. The ornate butter-coloured five-star hotel looks out over the Municipal House, and offers spa facilities and treatments, an on-site restaurant, and is centrally located (650 metres from the main train station).

Join our Explore History Reader Panel today!

Take our three-minute survey at **historyanswers.co.uk/explorehistorysurvey**

We've had a fantastic time making the first issue of **Explore History** and we hope you enjoy reading it. Over the next issues, we will continue to grow and evolve, so we need you to let us know what you want to see more of. By answering just a few questions, you could be selected for our first **Explore History** reader panel. We can't wait to hear from you.

Alex Hoskins
Deputy Editor

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What Peru's cloud colony can tell us about the Incas
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INSIGHT 2016

Explore History

Explore History Reader Survey 2016

1. How old are you?

○ 65+
○ 55-64
○ 45-54
○ 35-44
○ 25-34
○ 18-24
○ 13-18
○ Under 13

2. Are you male or female?

○ Male
○ Female

Which of the following best describes your current status?

○ Single, no children
○ Single, with children
○ Co-habiting, no children
○ Co-habiting, with children
○ Separated / Divorced, no children
○ Separated / Divorced, with children
○ Married, no children
○ Married, with children

at is your residential status?

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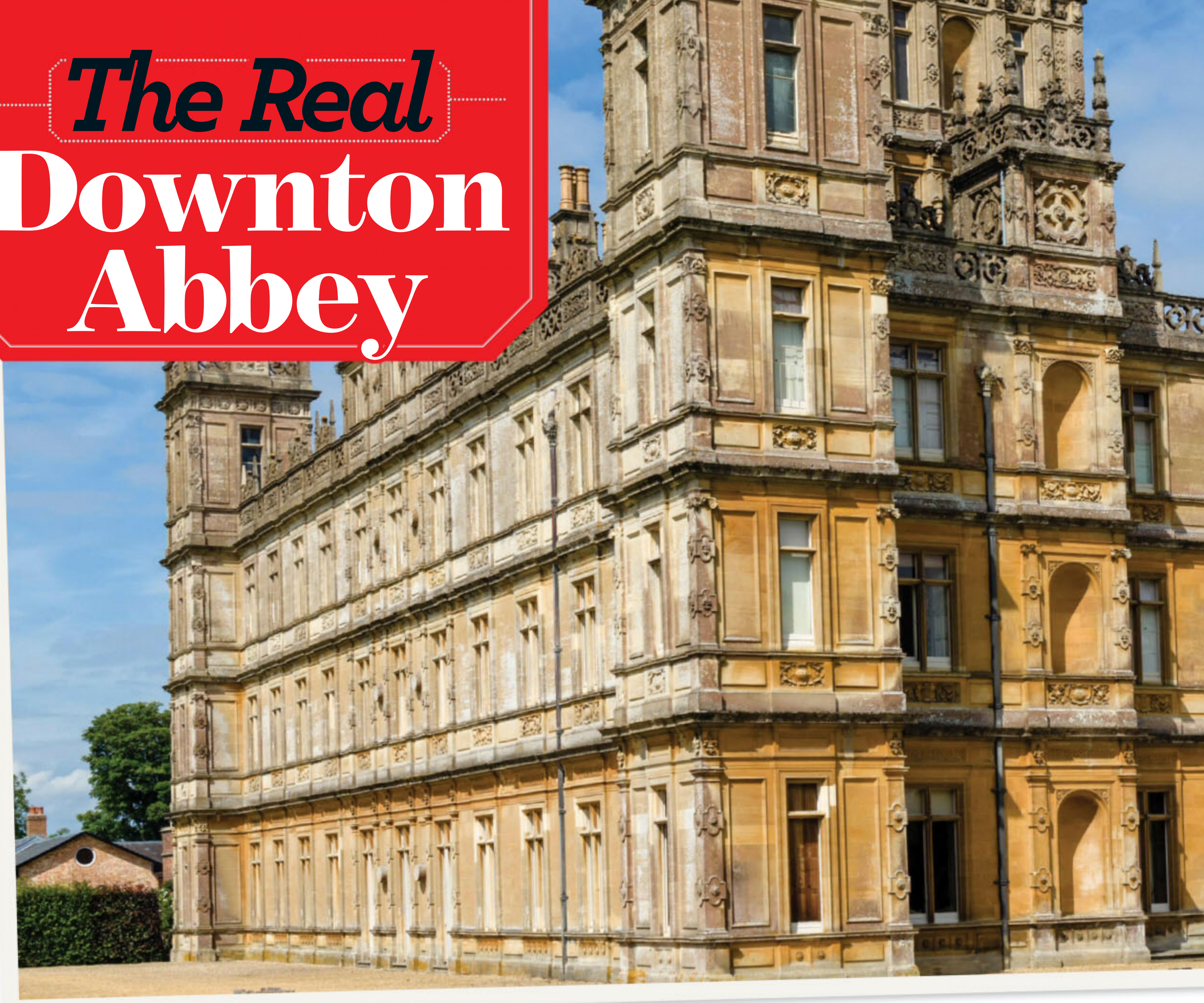
The Real Downton Abbey



Highclere Castle, instantly recognisable as the home of the Crawleys in ITV's Downton Abbey, has a history just as dramatic and scandalous as its fictional counterpart

Whether it was Carson proposing to Mrs Hughes or the Dowager Countess asking imperiously, "What is a weekend?" events at Downton Abbey were always entertaining. While some characters made an early exit (Matthew Crawley, for instance, who was killed off in a car crash) or exhibited their all too human frailties (Barrow the under-butler's malicious scheming, for example) there was one star that remained constant: the house itself. With its honeyed stonework, soaring towers and generous proportions (it boasts about 300 rooms) Highclere Castle – set in rural Hampshire, rather than Yorkshire – provided a spectacular backdrop to the series.

Built on the site of a Medieval palace, and rebuilt several times, it became home to the Carnarvon family in 1679 and is still their family seat. In 1838, the third earl decided to give the house the ultimate makeover and commissioned Sir Charles Barry (architect of the Palace of Westminster) to turn it into the extraordinary confection seen today – an imposing Jacobethan edifice with Italianate flourishes. It took 40 years to complete and its magnificent state rooms are filled with treasures: 17th-century Spanish leather wall-coverings in the saloon, for instance, and Dutch paintings in the smoking room. Many interiors became familiar to viewers as most of the series' 'upstairs' scenes were filmed in situ – the current chatelaine Lady Carnarvon once had to remind the film crew that they

The Egyptian Curse

Highclere has a stunning collection of Egyptian antiquities. They were collected by the fifth earl, a keen Egyptologist who, together with Howard Carter, is credited with discovering Tutankhamun's tomb in 1922. Tradition had it that the tomb was cursed, a superstition that appeared to be confirmed when the earl died in Cairo just a year later. Much of his collection was later sold to a museum; artefacts such as jewels, statues, jars and even the coffin of an aristocratic woman remained hidden in cupboards and were only rediscovered by the family in 1987.

> "The film crew couldn't light candles beneath a priceless Van Dyck oil painting"

ABOVE The double library, at Highclere which stretches to almost the whole length of the house

couldn't light candles beneath a priceless Van Dyck oil painting in the dining room.

Over the years Highclere has played host to a compelling cast of characters, from Benjamin Disraeli to Elizabeth II – who was great friends with the seventh earl. In World War I, the then countess, Lady Almina, turned it into a hospital for injured servicemen – an event mirrored in the series. Almina herself gained a reputation as an adulteress and was even accused of money laundering – her son, the sixth earl, apparently called her a "scheming swindler".

The house itself is not the only gem – there are also more than 400 hectares of glorious parkland, created in the 18th century by Lancelot 'Capability' Brown, who engineered sweeping lawns, lakes and his signature cedar trees to create an 'ideal' landscape. He even moved an entire village to ensure that nothing marred the view.

HIGHCLERE CASTLE

EXPLORER'S ✶ ESSENTIALS

Highclere Castle (01635 253204)
www.highclerecastle.co.uk

Opening times and admission price
Open : 1-3, 29-31 May, 10 July - 7 September (Sunday to Thursday) and 14 September
Grounds 9am – 6pm, castle 10.30am – 5pm
Adult: £22 ($32) Child: £13.50 ($19)

Look out for Follies in the grounds include an 18th-century pillared temple called Jackdaw's Castle, which offers great views of the house.

© Alamy, Courtesy of Carnival Films and Television. Photographer: Nick Briggs

INSIDE THE FORTIFIED CHURCHES of TRANSYLVANIA

WORDS BY
JONATHAN HATFULL

TRANSYLVANIA
ROMANIA

Standing on the hilltops of the Transylvanian countryside, the mighty fortified churches protected their citizens throughout centuries of Tatar and Ottoman invasion. Here's everything you need to know about Romania's most evocative attractions

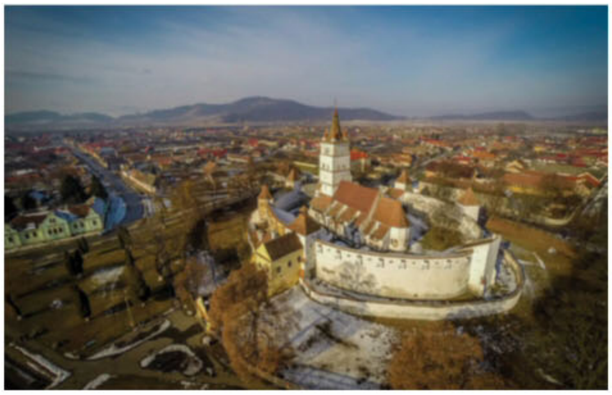
When we think of Transylvania, we think of the dark forests, the looming mountains and, perhaps inevitably, Count Dracula. For any visitor planning to pack their stakes and garlic to visit the ancestral home of Bram Stoker's creation, however, we'd suggest they should prioritise finding room for walking shoes and a camera, and that the very first item on their agenda should be the stunning fortified churches. And, before you ask, Uncover Romania's Diana Condrea would like everyone to be aware that they've got nothing to do with holding back the children of the night. "There's no place for vampires in Transylvania," she grins.

What there is a place for is the highest concentration of fortified churches anywhere in the world. Standing as imposing monuments to centuries past, these stunning combinations of religious devotion and military defence are the legacy of the region's complicated and often violent history, the struggles of the men and women who lived here, and help make this part of Romania so unique.

There are seven fortified churches on the UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) World Heritage list, and there are upwards of 150 still standing, although it should be noted that not all of them are in the best condition. "Only a few of them are properly conserved and, unfortunately, some have recently collapsed," Condrea, a tourism consultant and travel writer, tells us. "Efforts are, nonetheless, being made by local foundations, like Mihai Eminescu Trust, to rehabilitate them."

But why are there so many? The short answer is: defence. Transylvania may now be part of Romania, but historically it has always been a contested region. In the 12th century it was the gateway to the Hungarian Empire, which had conquered Transylvania several decades previously. It was King Géza II who invited German settlers into the region in the 12th century to establish towns and secure the region. They were granted a great deal of autonomy as an incentive, and the new arrivals, most of whom were Saxons, set to work building their own towns, at the centre of each of which was a church.

The Saxon presence grew in the 13th century after King Andrew II regretted inviting the Teutonic knights into the region. The military religious order were attempting to found a state of their own, and as part of his effort to get rid of them, Andrew granted the Saxons even more privileges and



ABOVE The fortified church at the village of Hărman in Brașov County. The original structure dates back to the 13th century autonomy with his Andreanum decree of 1224. With the freedom to elect their own local authorities and clergy, and only a single yearly payment to the king due in lieu of taxes, the Saxon presence in Transylvania flourished, and more and more towns grew.

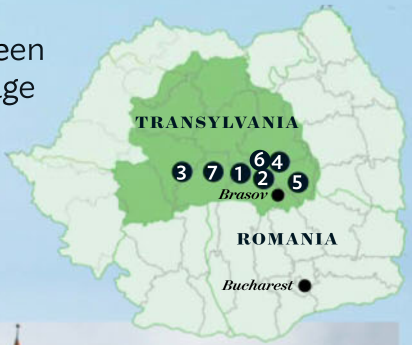
But this was not a one-way street. The defence part of the arrangement became apparent in the 13th century. The Cuman threat had mostly dissipated by this point, but the Tatar invasion in 1241 was a sharp reminder of how quickly this area could be overrun. Transylvania was absolutely devastated by Genghis Khan's armies, and Hungary itself was on the brink of collapse. The Tatar forces may have withdrawn a year later, but the need for fortifications to protect the territory and settlers who lived there, was clearly vital. The towns and churches that had been destroyed must be rebuilt, and they would need to be strong enough to withstand an attack.

"It's after this disaster that Hungarian authorities urge the fortification of the border villages where the German colonists had settled," Condrea tells us. "The colonists apply the military know-how from their home country, either building fortresses like in Saschiz or fortifying the existing church."

Another unique element in the construction of these fortifications is that they were created not by nobility, but by the church and by the Saxon settlers between the 12th and 15th centuries to protect and conserve. "They adapted their churches to serve as fortresses, adding a military purpose to their main religious and spiritual function," explains Condrea. "The hundreds of fortified churches they built combined these essentially different functions, the religious space becoming a functional one where locals could sleep, deposit their goods and animals and, most importantly, be safe for

The 7 UNESCO-protected churches

These churches have been chosen as World Heritage sites by UNESCO, for their similar patterns of land use, and excellent preservation since the Middle Ages



Biertan Biertan is one of the largest of Transylvania's fortified churches. The first known mention of it dates back to 1283, and it has seven towers and three levels of defensive walls, 10m high. It converted from Catholicism to Lutheranism, but kept a Catholic tower for those who did not.

> "Part of the UNESCO World Heritage Sites, the fortified church from Biertan is one of the best conserved and truly impressive in size, making it one of the best examples in the area"

Viscri Viscri comes from the German word Weisse Khirche, which translates as white church, and was actually taken over from the Székelers by the Saxons, rather than built by them. Although much was destroyed in the Tartar invasion and later defensive modifications were made, it remains one of the oldest in the region.

Câlnic Built in 1269 by nobleman Chyll de Kelling, it was sold to the village in 1430, and work on a new church and defensive additions began in the 16th century. With two fortified walls (and, at one point, a moat), it's best known for the imposing Siegfried tower, which helped defend the church during the Ottoman invasion.

Dârjiu Because of its lofty location, the wall surrounding the Dârjiu church was relatively low, but the Gate Tower offered plenty of opportunities for defensive action, and the fortress offers a stunning example of Gothic architecture. It's still very functional today, as locals keep their grain in the barn.

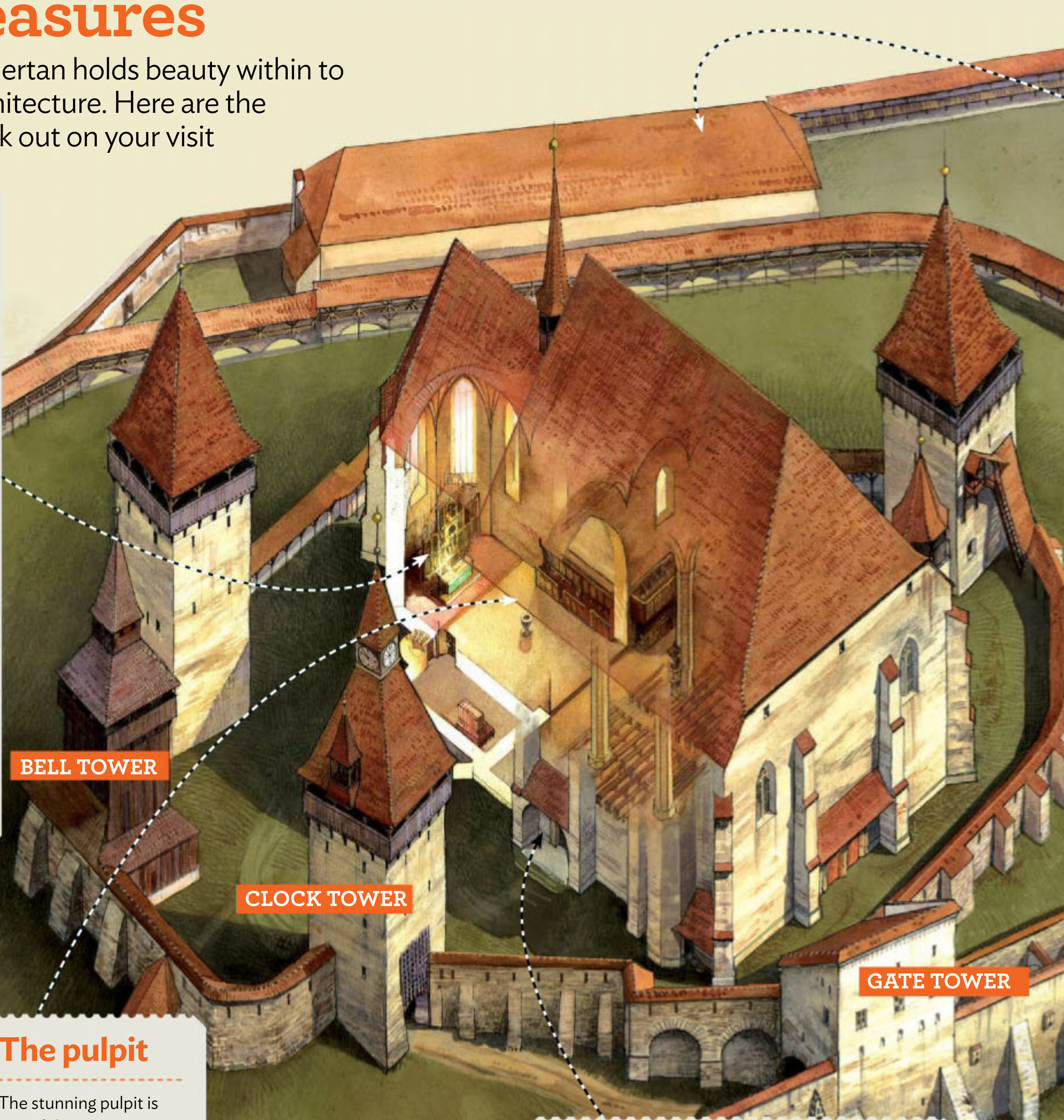
Prejmer-Tartlau Originally started by the Teutonic Knights in 1218 and completed by the Cistercians, its formidable design (protective wall, five towers, a moat) are due to the fact that it was located in a crucial spot on the Buzău Pass, through which invaders had to travel, and it was often under attack.

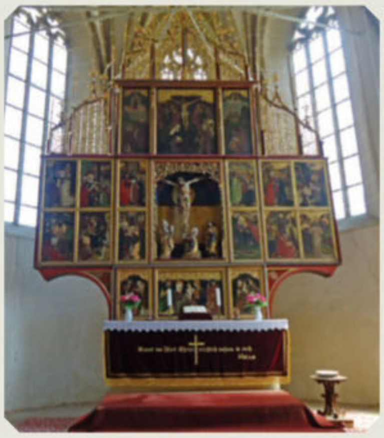
Saschiz-Keisd A beautiful (and huge) example of late Gothic construction, Saschiz-Keisd was created between 1493 and 1525, and is a rare example of a fortified church not being located at the centre of a town. Instead, it's 2km away, to enable villagers from other towns to take advantage of its protection.

Valea Viilor A Lutheran church built on the ruins of a Romanesque one, the fortified church at Valea Viilor is more than double the size of the building it replaced. With its enormous defensive bell tower and 8m tall walls, it's an imposing sight, and there is a fresh-water well in the middle of the choir.

Find Biertan's hidden treasures

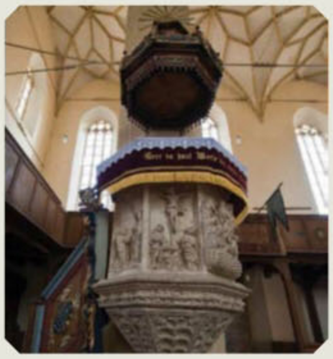
The fortified church at Biertan holds beauty within to equal its spectacular architecture. Here are the must-see features to seek out on your visit





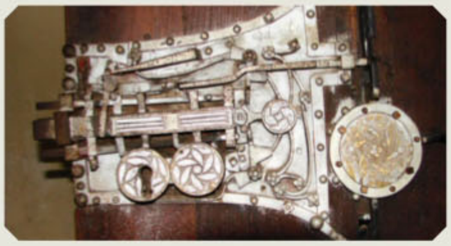
The altar

Biertan church's altar is the largest in Transylvania. Sculpted from wood, the altar displays 28 icons portraying scenes from Holy Scripture. It was created between 1482 and 1513 by artisans from Vienna and Nuremberg, and at the centre is a beautiful crucifixion scene.



The pulpit

The stunning pulpit is one of the true treasures of the Biertan church. Carved from a single piece of rock and dating back to 1523 with biblical scenes carved in relief, it's a beautiful example of the transition between Gothic and Renaissance styles.

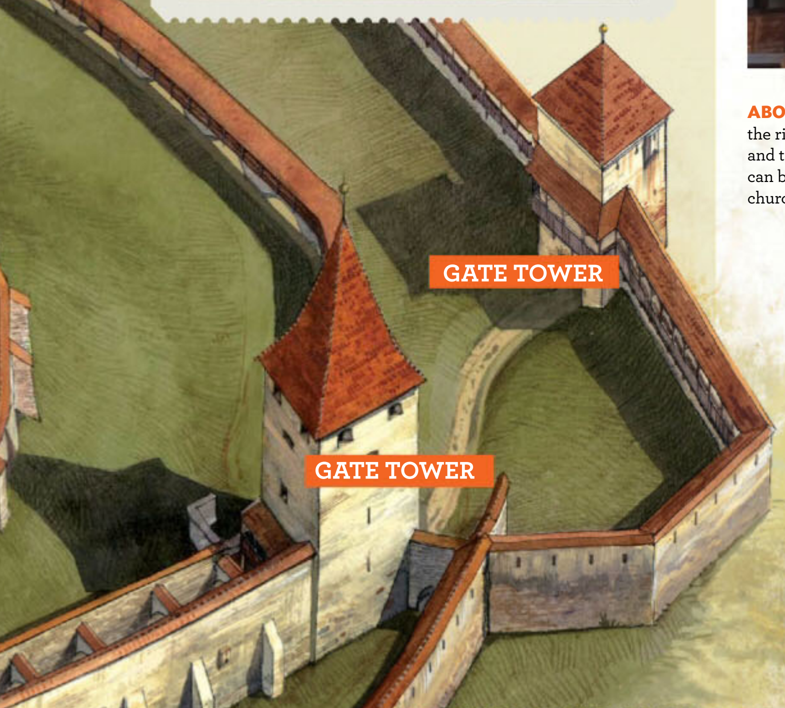


The sacristy door

The incredibly intricate sacristy door was built in 1515. It has a complex and innovative system of closing, and staying closed, that is comprised of 19 locks being activated simultaneously. It is so impressive that it was exhibited at the Paris World's Fair in 1900.

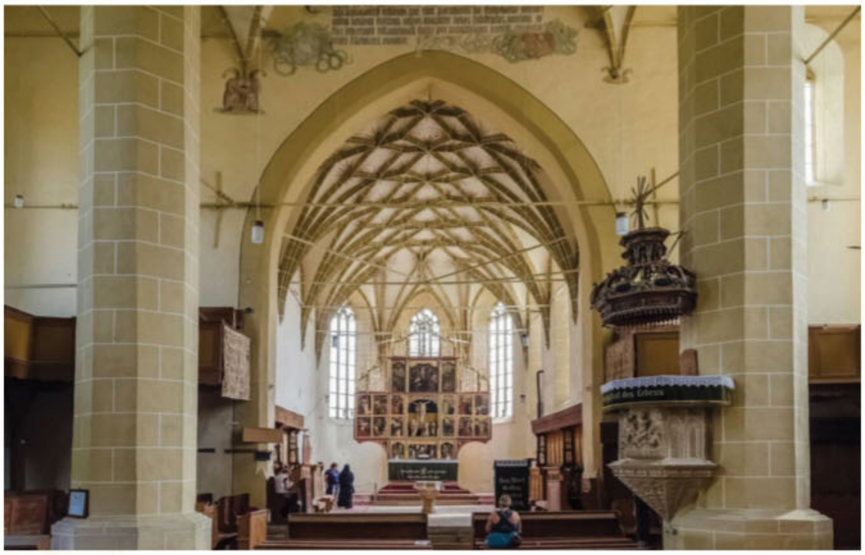
The marital room

If a local couple was thinking about divorce, they were placed in here to have a serious think about it. There was only one bed, one plate and one spoon, and two whole weeks to work through your issues.



The view

Finally, anyone going to the church at Biertan should absolutely make certain to enjoy the stunning view. The fortified church was positioned to offer a commanding vista of the surrounding area (to keep an eye out for invading forces), so make sure you have your camera ready.



ABOVE The pulpit, on the right in the image, and the shrine at the altar can be seen in Biertan's church today

longer periods of time." Creating these fortified churches was not cheap, but the constant threat made it clear that it was absolutely necessary.

They were, for the most part, built in locations that could act as defensive and observational positions, which is the reason why they strike such a powerful impact on visitors today, standing as watchtowers and guardians on the region's hilltops. There's no doubt about their military effectiveness: the bell towers were indeed towering, the pyramid tower shapes meant that projectiles rolled off to prevent the burning of the church, defensive platforms were added to the church choirs, walls were built around the exterior... but they never lost their religious function.

Over the course of the next few centuries the defences would be put to frequent use, as the Ottoman Empire was a constant threat to the people of Transylvania. After the Hungarian Empire fell to the Ottomans, Transylvania was given relative autonomy, but the region was rarely peaceful, as rebellions and counter-rebellions lasted through the 17th century. It was a time during which stability was rare, and the different building styles reflect just how urgent the danger was at the time. As the Ottoman threat grew, so did the churches.

"There are three types of fortified churches, influenced by the time of their construction," explains Condrea. "The first type has most of the fortifications outside the church like in Prejmer while in the second case, like in Biertan, the church was substantially reinforced, including by adding defensive levels, towers and bastions besides the fortification walls that surrounded the church. The third type appears in the late 15th century. In this case, the churches have an original defensive structure, like in Saschiz."

What remains is extraordinary, a reminder of these people's faith and their fortitude, and the dangers of the times in which they lived. While Biertan may be the most renowned, Condrea tells us that going off the beaten track is essential.

"Visitors should also include less famous fortified churches besides the ones from the UNESCO Heritage Patrimony," she enthuses. "To make the best out of their trip, I would suggest taking accommodation in a traditional village (Malancrav, Crit, Viscri, Alma Vii are excellent options) and do the tour partially on bike. This way the experience is complete."

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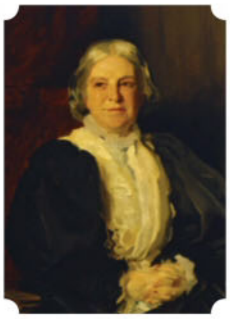
HERITAGE HERO

OCTAVIA HILL

THE BIRTH OF THE NATIONAL TRUST

Octavia Hill was born in Wisbech, Cambridgeshire in 1838 to Caroline and James Hill. The daughter of reformer Thomas Southwood Smith, Caroline was passionate about women's rights and though James was a wealthy merchant, he fostered radical political interests.

When James was declared bankrupt and insane, Caroline and her daughters began a new life in Finchley. Aged just 14, Octavia began supervising the children of a ragged school and was mixing with some of the most deprived communities. She became convinced the way forward was social housing and in 1864, John Ruskin financed the purchase of her first properties. With a principle of "philanthropy and five per cent", those who lived in Octavia's houses could not expect charity without responsibility: they had to work for the rent to be paid.



ABOVE In 1898, 60-year-old Octavia Hill sat for this portrait by the famed artist, John Singer Sargent

It was all very well ensuring those in need had a roof over their head, but what of their leisure? Believing that people born and bred in the urban sprawl had as much right to fresh air and open spaces as the wealthy, Octavia and her sister, Miranda, established the Kyrle Society.

Named for philanthropist John Kyrle, the society intended to provide the working classes with recreation and culture, including art, literature and green spaces. Octavia even successfully campaigned against the redevelopment of what she called the 'green belt', preserving recreation spaces for the public. The society garnered some illustrious patrons including William Morris, who would play a part in Octavia's lasting legacy.

St Michael's Mount, Cornwall is one of National Trust's most visually striking locations

> *"We need four things. Places to sit in, places to play in, places to stroll in, and places to spend a day in"*
>
> OCTAVIA HILL

While attempting to find a legal way to secure the future of historic sites, Octavia met a kindred spirit in Sir Robert Hunter of the Commons Preservation Society. Their campaigning focus soon extended beyond London to the Lake District and it was here that John Ruskin introduced them to Canon Hardwicke Rawnsley, who shared their zeal for Britain's heritage. Ruskin had long dreamed of an organisation dedicated to the preservation of historic sites and thanks to Hill, Hunter and Rawnsley, that dream became reality.

It was this trio that, in 1895, registered a charity named The National Trust for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty. Their first acquisition was Dinas Oleu, a few acres of Welsh clifftop, followed in 1896 by the purchase of Alfriston Clergy House, at a cost of £10. The house was derelict and the trust turned to William Morris's Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings for advice. Together the groups agreed not to restore the property, but to preserve it. It is a relationship and ethos that endures today.

From these first steps the trust grew, acquiring property and land across the country. In 1902, as its reach expanded, the three founders planted oak trees at the Brandelhow in the Lake District, where they still grow.

Better known to us as The National Trust, the organisation founded in 1895 exists to this day to protect houses, monuments, places of industry and the green belt that Octavia held so dear. When Octavia Hill died in 1912 her place in history was assured, a true heritage hero.

MAKING A HERO

❶

The National Trust

Heritage credentials don't come much higher than being a founder member of the National Trust.

❷

Social housing

With the backing of illustrious patrons, Octavia launched a pioneering housing scheme.

❸

The Army Cadets

Established the Southwark Cadet Company, for "the young lad before he gets in with a gang of loafers".

❹

Green belt

In celebration of the green spaces she saved from destruction, a hill in Kent shares her name.

❺

The 21st century

The Octavia Foundation continues her work to this day, providing support to those in need.

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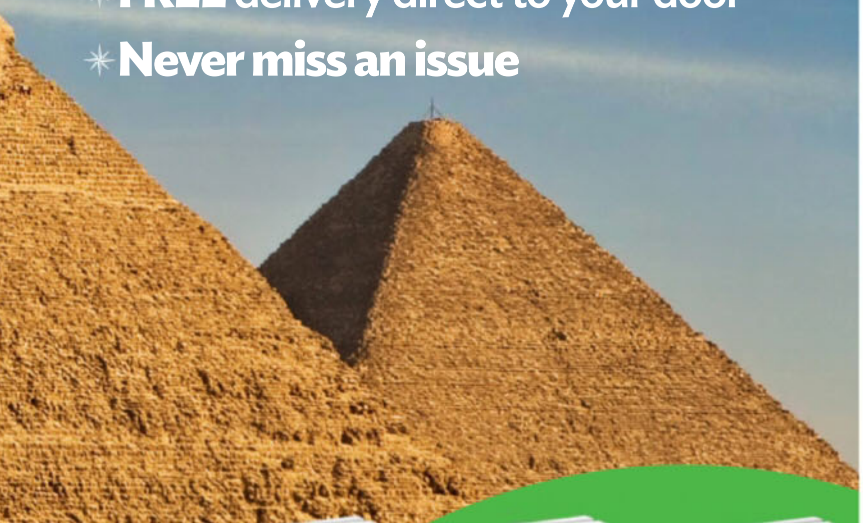

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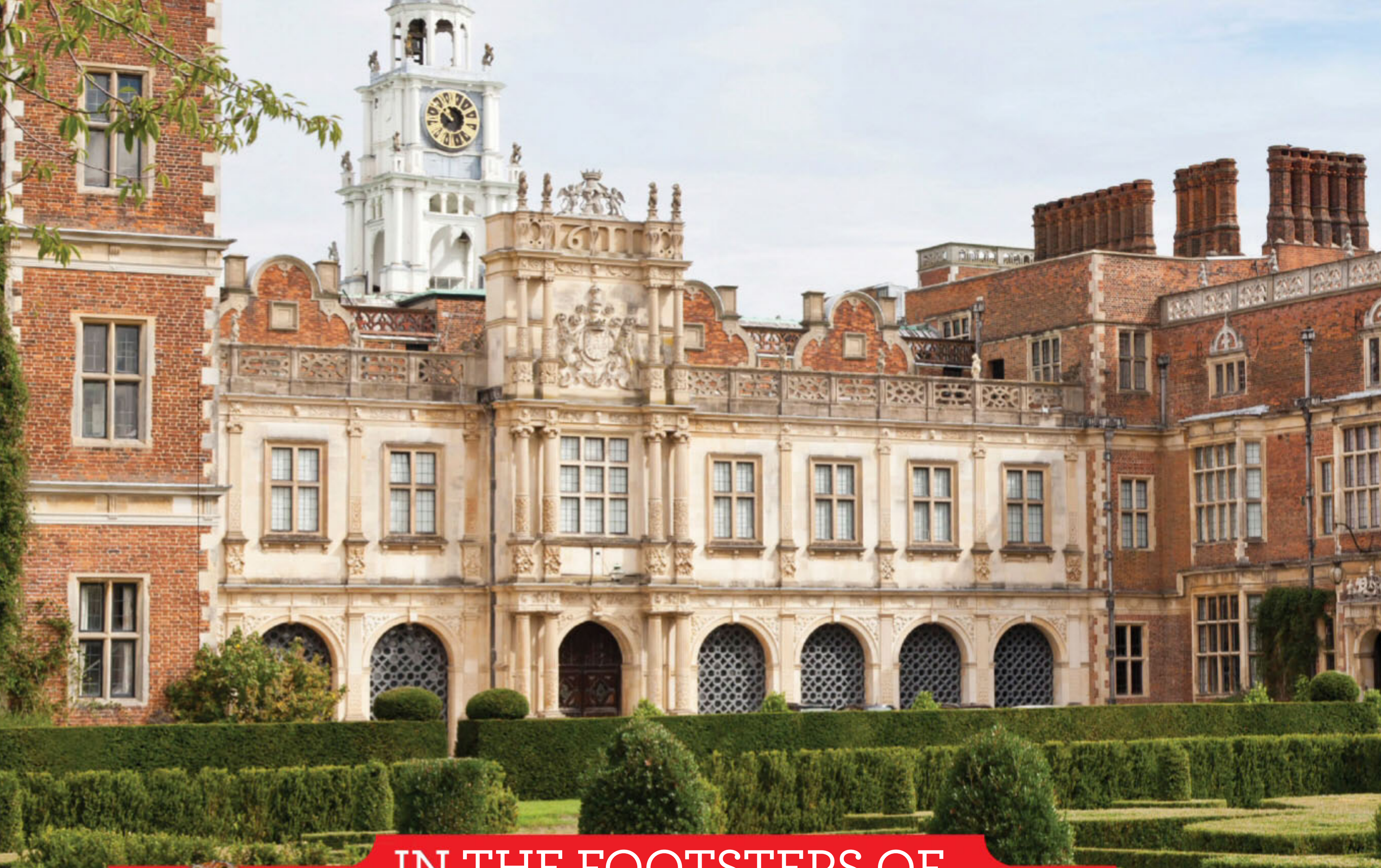


IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF...

Elizabeth I

Don your riding boots and follow the Virgin Queen on a Tudor adventure taking in some of England's most historic places

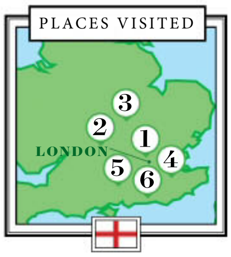
It is the 16th century and the Queen of England is travelling through your town or village on her Royal Progress. You haven't seen her before – after all, there is no television, internet or photography. The queen might seem as distant from your life as the New World, or perhaps even God. How might you feel looking upon your anointed sovereign for the first time?

Under Elizabeth's rule between 1558-1603, England rose from its position as a backwater to a confident European power. Her father, Henry VIII, beheaded her mother and she was declared illegitimate. Elizabeth was accused of treason and imprisoned by her half-sister Mary I, and was nearly executed before being reluctantly released. Elizabeth never married and became known as the 'Virgin Queen'. When she died in 1603, James VI of Scotland, the son of her rival Mary, Queen of Scots, succeeded her.

Her reign is remembered as a high point of English history, with the birth of the British Empire and cultural flowering. Elizabeth showed herself to the people in a blaze of pomp and ceremony on her Progress, and many of the places she visited still exist and form a trail for Tudor tourists. From great churches and palaces to country houses and pubs, all have fascinating connections with the life of Elizabeth.

WORDS BY TOM GARNER

PLACES VISITED



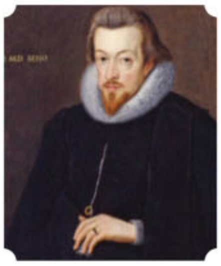
DATE VISITED: **1558**

HATFIELD HOUSE

1 **Hatfield is the residence of the 7th Marquis and Marchioness of Salisbury and has been associated with the Cecil family for over 400 years.** It is actually made up of two houses, both of which are associated with Elizabeth I. The main house is Jacobean and was completed by Robert Cecil, first Earl of Salisbury in 1611, eight years after Elizabeth's death. Cecil (like his father, William, before him) had served as Elizabeth's Secretary of State but his continued success under James I meant that he could afford to build a grand house to entertain the King and chose to build it next to Hatfield's Old Palace, which has direct connections with Elizabeth.

The Old Palace is the remains of a much bigger palace built by the Bishop of Ely in 1485. Robert Cecil knocked down three-quarters of the Old Palace to make way for his Jacobean house but what survives is a wing that contains the Banqueting Hall and most of its original roof timbers. Elizabeth spent much of her childhood here. After she was released from the Tower of London during Mary I's reign, Elizabeth stayed at Hatfield under virtual house arrest. It was during her time here that she learned of her accession to the throne in 1558, under an oak tree in the palace gardens. A later oak tree still marks this famous historical moment.

One of Elizabeth's first acts as queen was to call a Council of State (which included William Cecil), held in the Palace's Banqueting Hall.



ABOVE: Robert Cecil, first Earl of Salisbury

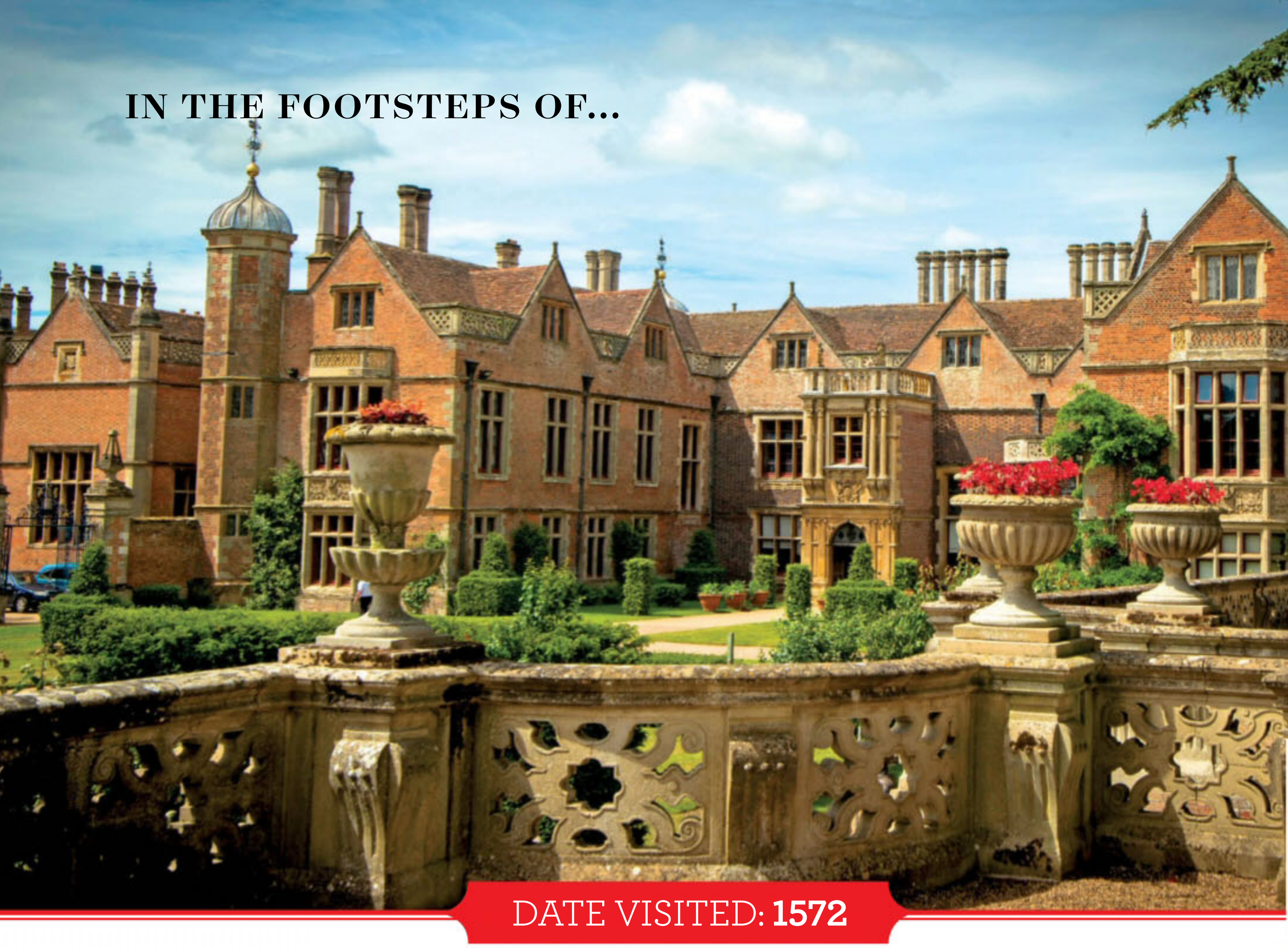
✴ Hatfield is open between 26 March – 30 September 2016. Check the website for specific opening times and prices.

ABOVE: Hatfield House sits adjacent to the Old Palace, where Elizabeth I stayed

Look out for

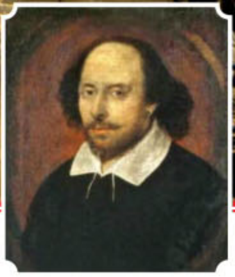
Objects associated with Elizabeth, such as the famous Rainbow Portrait and clothing items including a hat, gloves and silk stockings.

A view of the Old Palace and knot garden parterre at Hatfield House

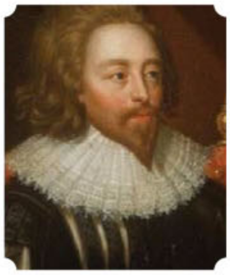


DATE VISITED: **1572**

CHARLECOTE PARK



ABOVE Shakespeare has been linked to the mansion



ABOVE Sir Thomas Lucy built the current house

2 **Charlecote is a wonderful Tudor mansion on the banks of the River Avon, and has been the home of the Lucy family since 1247**. It is distinguished by its roaming deer park, designed by Capability Brown. Sir Thomas Lucy, who served as a magistrate under Elizabeth I, built the current house. The Queen herself visited Charlecote and stayed in a chamber that now serves as the drawing room, where there is a contemporary portrait of her. Charlecote has maintained its Tudor exterior appearance and is notable for its ornate chimney pots and impressive gatehouse.

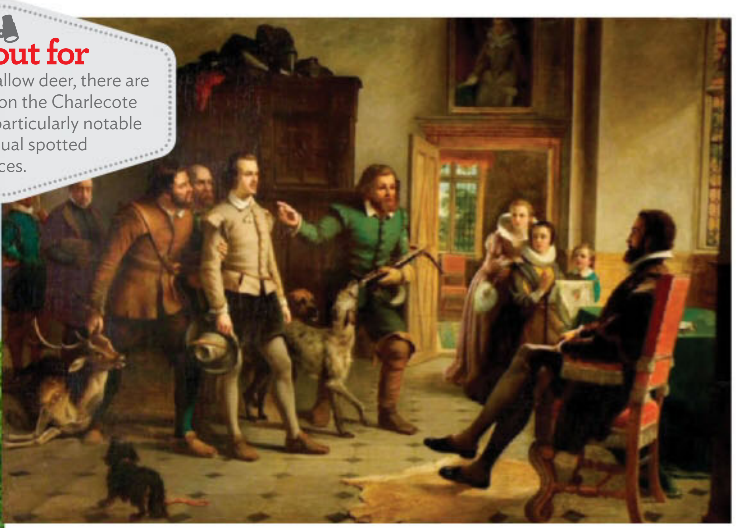
There is a deeply rooted tale that a young William Shakespeare was caught poaching deer from the estate, and that this may have had something to do with his eventual move to London and his dramatic career. It is speculated that the character of Justice Shallow in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* is a parody of Sir Thomas Lucy.

Charlecote offers free entry for National Trust members. It also operates limited winter opening hours.

Charlecote is a fantastic place to immerse yourself in Tudor architecture

Look out for

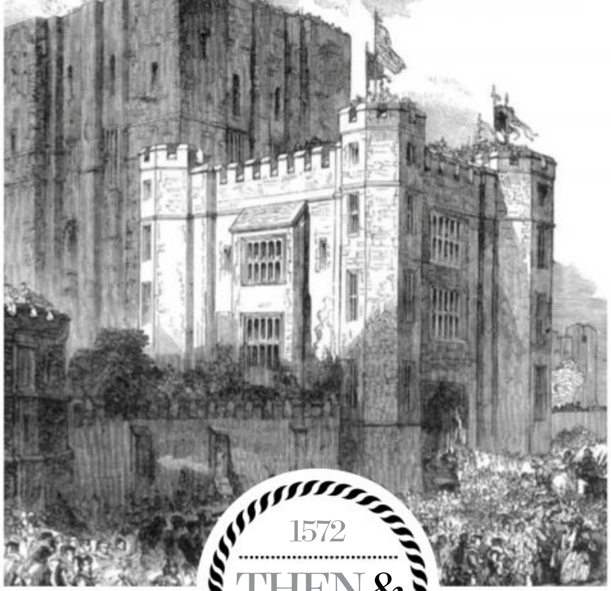
In addition to the fallow deer, there are also Jacob sheep on the Charlecote estate, which are particularly notable for their unusual spotted fleeces.



ABOVE This painting is called *Shakespeare Before Thomas Lucy* and depicts the poaching story

DATE VISITED: **1575**

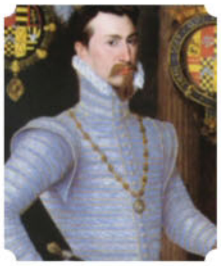
KENILWORTH CASTLE



ABOVE: Shown at the top is an illustration of the scene of a previous visit from Elizabeth to an unfinished Kenilworth. Below is the castle as it stands today

3 **Kenilworth is one of England's greatest ruined castles.** Built around 1120, it was transformed from a military fortress into a grand royal palace and witnessed the longest siege in English history, the abdication of King Edward II and the 'tennis balls' incident that sparked the Agincourt campaign (made famous by William Shakespeare's play *Henry V*). Its main association, however, is Elizabeth I and her relationship with her favourite courtier Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester.

Around two-thirds of Kenilworth is ruined, but the intact architecture dates from the Tudor period. Robert Dudley's father, the Duke of Northumberland, built the impressive stable block in the early 1550s, where the tearoom and museum now stand. Dudley himself built a gatehouse, state apartments and garden for Elizabeth in the 1560s-70s.



ABOVE Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester

The gatehouse is the most intact part of the castle with ornate wooden panelling and staircases, while the state apartments have platforms that enable visitors to see a similar view to the one Elizabeth saw on her visit. The gardens, opened in 2009, are a detailed replica based on archaeological findings and primary sources, and include a working fountain and aviary.

Exploring the castle ruins will reveal gems like the massive keep of 1120, John of Gaunt's Great Hall and the Strong Tower, with its striking panoramic views.

✴ **Kenilworth is open from 10am-6pm daily, 21 March–30 September. Entry is free for English Heritage members.**

BELOW: Actors portray Elizabeth and Robert Dudley in the grounds of Kenilworth Castle

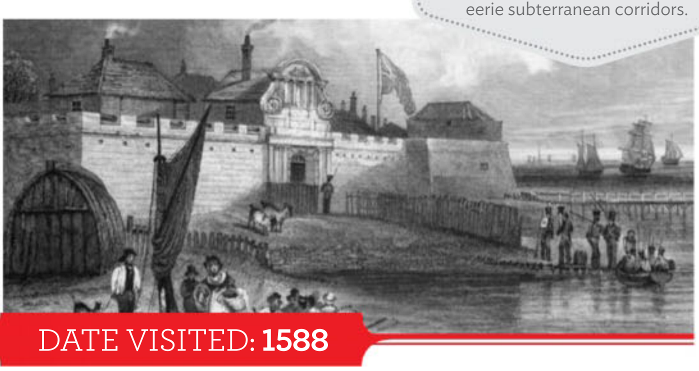
Look out for

A part of Elizabeth I's ornate bed in Leicester's Gatehouse. It has her initials secretly carved into it. Make sure to ask a member of staff for more details.

BELOW: Queen Elizabeth rallied her army nearby to face the threat of the Armada at Tilbury Fort, which was built by Henry VIII

Look out for

Tilbury contains a network of underground tunnels where gunpowder magazines were kept, accessed through eerie subterranean corridors.



DATE VISITED: **1588**

TILBURY FORT

4 **The current structure of Tilbury Fort dates from the late 17th century but it is famous thanks to one of the most iconic speeches in English history.** In 1588, England stood on the brink of invasion from the Spanish Armada, a huge fleet sent by Philip II of Spain to conquer England and depose its Protestant queen. The Royal Navy and poor weather conditions sealed the Armada's doom but Elizabeth rode to Tilbury where her army was encamped. Elizabeth addressed her soldiers with a rousing address saying, "I know I have the body of a weak and feeble woman; but I have the heart and stomach of a king, and a king of England too, and think foul scorn that Parma, or Spain, or any prince of Europe, should dare to invade the borders of my realm." This defiance and Elizabeth's appearance at Tilbury helped seal her reputation and became a part of the nation's story.

✳ **Tilbury Fort is open between 25 March and 30 September. Entry is free for anyone with English Heritage membership.**

DATE VISITED: **1592**

Look out for

A plaque that contains a lodged musket ball that very nearly killed Charles I (or so legend has it) before he went to battle.

SHAW HOUSE

5 **Shaw House is a well-preserved red brick Elizabethan manor that has changed little since Elizabeth's time.** A wealthy cloth merchant called Thomas Dolman built it in 1581 and it was a Royalist stronghold during the First English Civil War (1642-46). In 1644 the house was looted by Parliamentarian troops but the structure was left relatively undamaged. Apart from a few 19th century additions, the house is one of the least altered Elizabethan houses to survive.

Shaw has a connection to Elizabeth I as she visited the house in 1592. In that year, Elizabeth took part in a Progress throughout southern England. She probably stayed in a first floor chamber, which is now called King Charles' Room. As royalists owned the house during the Civil War, it is likely that Charles I visited, especially as the Second Battle of Newbury was fought nearby.

✳ **Shaw House is open to visitors every weekend between 13 February and 25 September, 11am-4pm. Admission is free.**

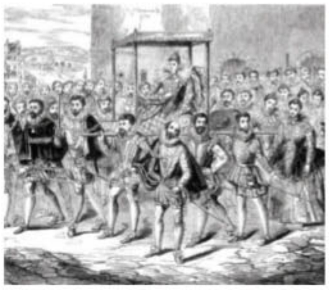
On the Royal Progress

Elizabeth was famous for her travels around England, where she stayed at her nobles' houses and showed herself to her people

During the summer months, Elizabeth would undertake her famous Royal Progresses around her kingdom. These regal tours served two functions: firstly so that the queen could be seen by, and interact with, her subjects; and also so she could assert her authority in a direct way. To host Elizabeth was considered to be a very great privilege indeed, and many saw the opportunity to strengthen ties with the crown in order to win favours.

Elizabeth generally stayed with her courtiers at their country homes, and while it was a great honour, her visit could also test the strength of her hosts' finances to breaking point. This was because Elizabeth brought hundreds of courtiers and retainers with her and they all needed to be fed and accommodated. Even the government accompanied her as political power theoretically resided in the body of the queen.

Elizabeth selected a different county or region to travel through on each progress. For example, in 1578 she visited the east of England and plotted an almost circular route which took in Hatfield House, Woburn Abbey, Cambridge, Ely, Blickling Hall, Norwich, Melford Hall, Hedingham Castle and finally Tilbury Fort. However Elizabeth did not manage to visit her whole kingdom, going no further north than Stafford in the Midlands.



ABOVE: Elizabeth would take hundreds and sometimes even thousands of courtiers on her Royal Progress

The main Baron's Hall area of Penshurt Place is built from local sandstone

Look out for
Make sure you save time to take a step on the creaky floorboards in the Long Gallery. The same noises were used as sound effects in the *Harry Potter* films!

DATE VISITED: **1599**

PENSHURST PLACE

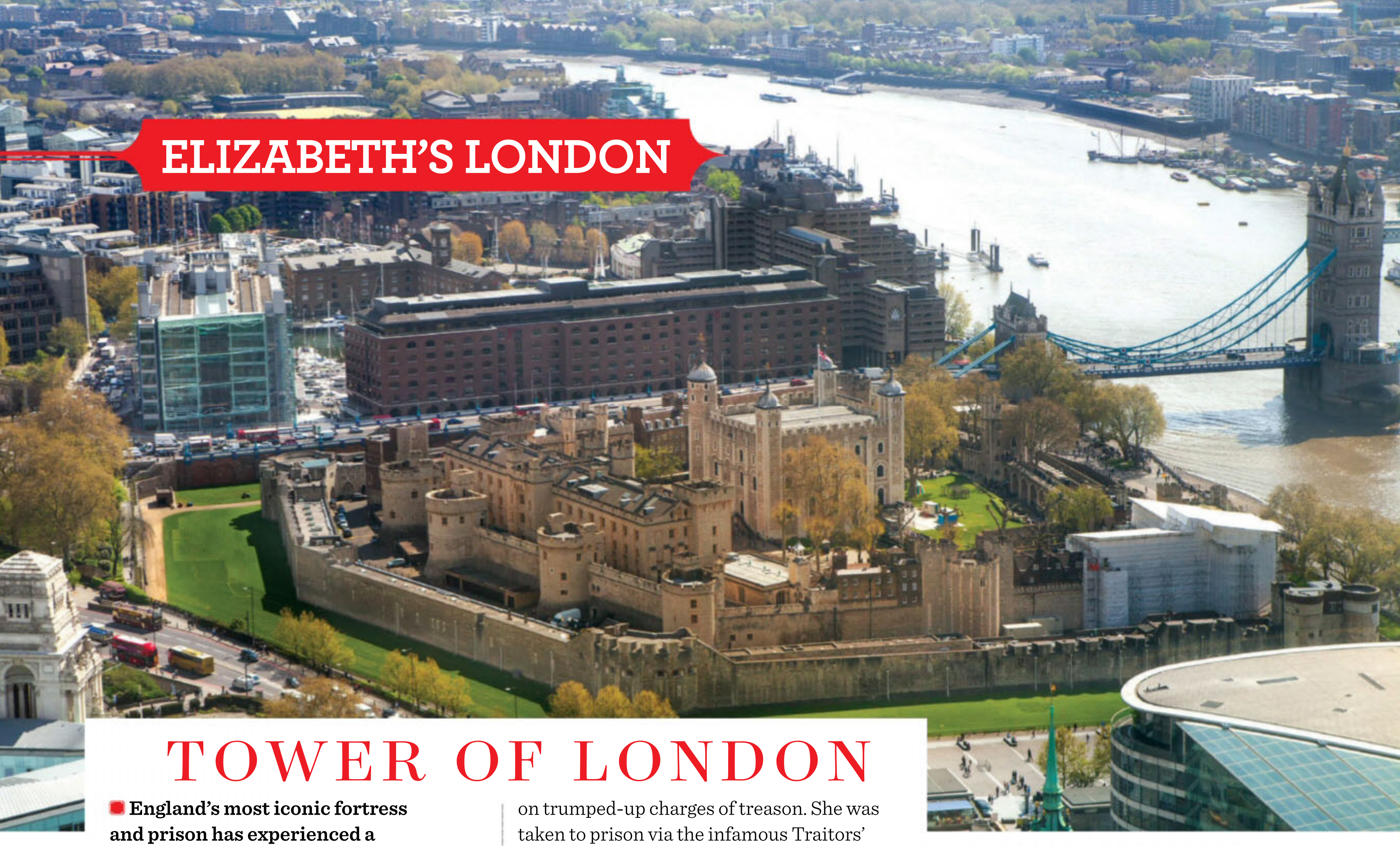
6 **Penshurst is the ancestral seat of the Sidney family and much of the house was first built in 1341.** It remains one of the finest surviving examples of 14th century domestic architecture in England. The Sidney family acquired the house in 1552 and enlarged it. One of the most famous family members was Sir Philip Sidney, a renowned poet and soldier of the Elizabethan court. His death at the Battle of Zutphen in the Netherlands in 1586 made him a Protestant national hero. He was given a state funeral at St Paul's Cathedral in London, the first commoner to receive this tribute.

Elizabeth first visited Penshurst late in her reign in 1599 but she visited several times afterwards and the opulent Queen Elizabeth Room is named after her. Penshurst has maintained its Tudor fame by becoming a film and TV set for period dramas including *Anne of the Thousand Days* (1969), *The Other Boleyn Girl* (2007), *Armada: 12 Days to Save England* (2015) and the critically acclaimed *Wolf Hall* (2015).

Open daily from 25 March–30 October. Season tickets are available. See website (www.penshurstplace.com) for detailed times and prices.

Penshurst has formed the backdrop for TV and film, including *The Other Boleyn Girl*

ABOVE When he owned Penshurst, Henry VIII used it as a hunting lodge and base for courting Anne Boleyn



TOWER OF LONDON

England's most iconic fortress and prison has experienced a disproportionate amount of history. Begun by William the Conqueror in 1078 it has witnessed the imprisonments of kings of France and Scotland, the murder of Henry VI and the disappearance of the Princes in the Tower. In the 16th century it became notable as a place of execution and the names of those beheaded included three queens of England: Catherine Howard (the fifth wife of Henry VIII), Lady Jane Grey (who ruled for nine days) and most famously Elizabeth's mother, Anne Boleyn. Elizabeth herself was imprisoned in the Tower.

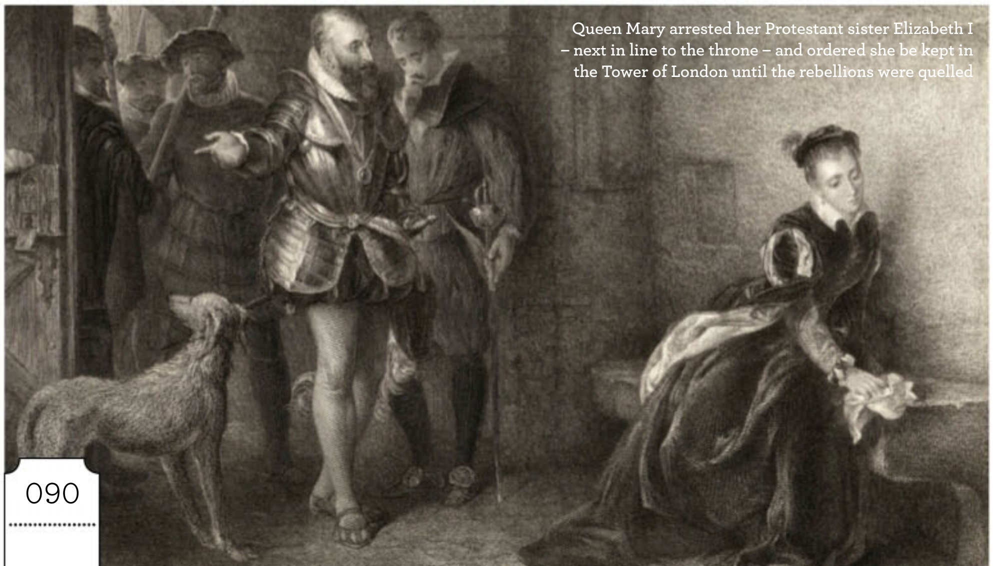
After a failed rebellion against Mary, Elizabeth was taken to the Tower in 1554 on trumped-up charges of treason. She was taken to prison via the infamous Traitors' Gate on the River Thames and then locked up in the Bell Tower. The princess vehemently denied her guilt but she came close to execution, as Mary hated her.

Her childhood friend, Robert Dudley, was also imprisoned in the Tower at the same time and it is reckoned that their future close relationship was forged by their mutual sufferings in prison. Eventually Elizabeth was released but was kept under virtual house arrest for the rest of Mary's reign. The Tower is still an awe-inspiring and forboding place to visit and is one of the top attractions to visit in London.

Look out for

Grim Tudor graffiti that was carved into surfaces by suffering Catholic prisoners during Elizabeth's reign in the Beauchamp Tower.

The Tower is open every day except 24-26 December and 1 January. Entry is free for members of Historic Royal Palaces.

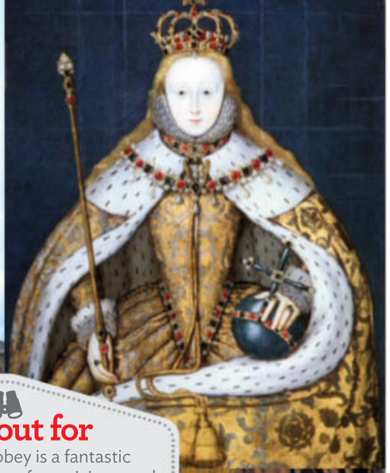


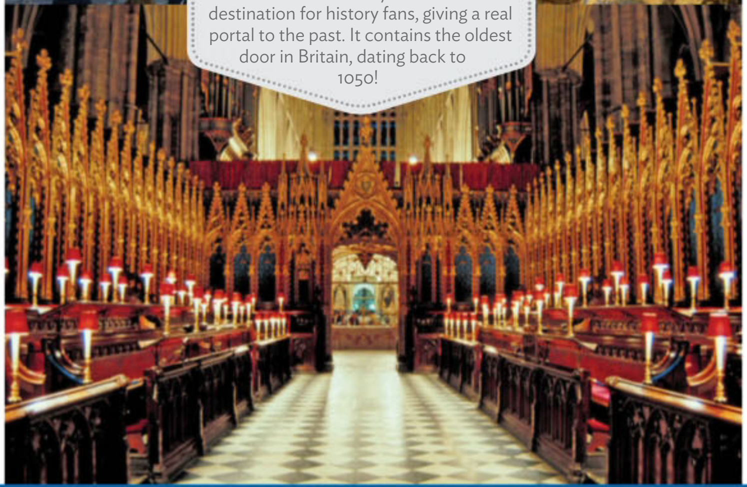
Queen Mary arrested her Protestant sister Elizabeth I – next in line to the throne – and ordered she be kept in the Tower of London until the rebellions were quelled

YE OLDE MITRE PUB

Tucked away in the heart of London is a remarkable pub. Ye Olde Mitre is located in Holborn, near Chancery Lane and between Lincoln's Inn Fields and St Paul's Cathedral. It was built in 1546 for the servants of the Bishops of Ely. The pub's most famous connection is with Elizabeth I. In the 16th century the land surrounding the pub was given to one of the Queen's favourite courtiers, Sir Christopher Hatton. The Queen was fond of Hatton and Mary Queen of Scots spread a rumour that they were lovers. The local legend of the pub is that Elizabeth and Hatton danced around a cherry tree on its premises, which is preserved in the front bar.

Ye Olde Mitre is closed at weekends and is open from between 11am-11pm Monday to Friday. It can prove difficult to find – the postcode is EC1N 6SJ.





Look out for

Westminster Abbey is a fantastic destination for history fans, giving a real portal to the past. It contains the oldest door in Britain, dating back to 1050!

WESTMINSTER ABBEY

Westminster Abbey saw probably the most important event in Elizabeth's life: her coronation. The Bishop of Carlisle crowned Elizabeth on 15 January 1559. Usually the monarch is crowned by the Archbishop of Canterbury but the See was vacant and the Archbishop of York refused to take the service. Elizabeth's coronation was also the first time English was used in the service instead of Latin.

Elizabeth was buried in the abbey when she died in 1603. Thousands of people came to see her funeral procession to Westminster on 28 April 1603 when there was, "such a general sighing, groaning and weeping as the like hath not been seen or known in the memory of man". Her coffin is laid above her half-sister Mary I in the north aisle of her grandfather Henry VII's chapel. She is also buried opposite her rival for the throne Mary, Queen of Scots. Westminster Abbey is an unrivalled place to see Tudor history crammed into a few square feet of stone.

✳ Westminster Abbey is usually open to visitors from Monday-Saturday throughout the year.

HAMPTON COURT

On the edge of Greater London is the opulent Hampton Court Palace. Built by Cardinal Thomas Wolsey from 1515, it was taken over by Henry VIII during the English Reformation and became a principal residence of Elizabeth I. The Queen did not add much to the architecture as it was already a magnificent palace, but she used it to welcome foreign delegations as well as for dramatic performances and masques.

Elizabeth nearly died in 1562 when she caught smallpox at Hampton Court and she was very lucky to survive. During her illness she declared that her favourite, Robert Dudley, was to become Protector of England in the event of her death. She was so fond of Dudley that she had him moved into a room close to her own at Hampton Court. This understandably prompted rumours that never went away about what the precise nature of their relationship really was.

✳ Check the website (www.hrp.org.uk) for opening times and prices. Free entry is granted to members of Historic Royal Palaces.

The splendour of Hampton Court is entwined in the lives of Henry VIII and Elizabeth I

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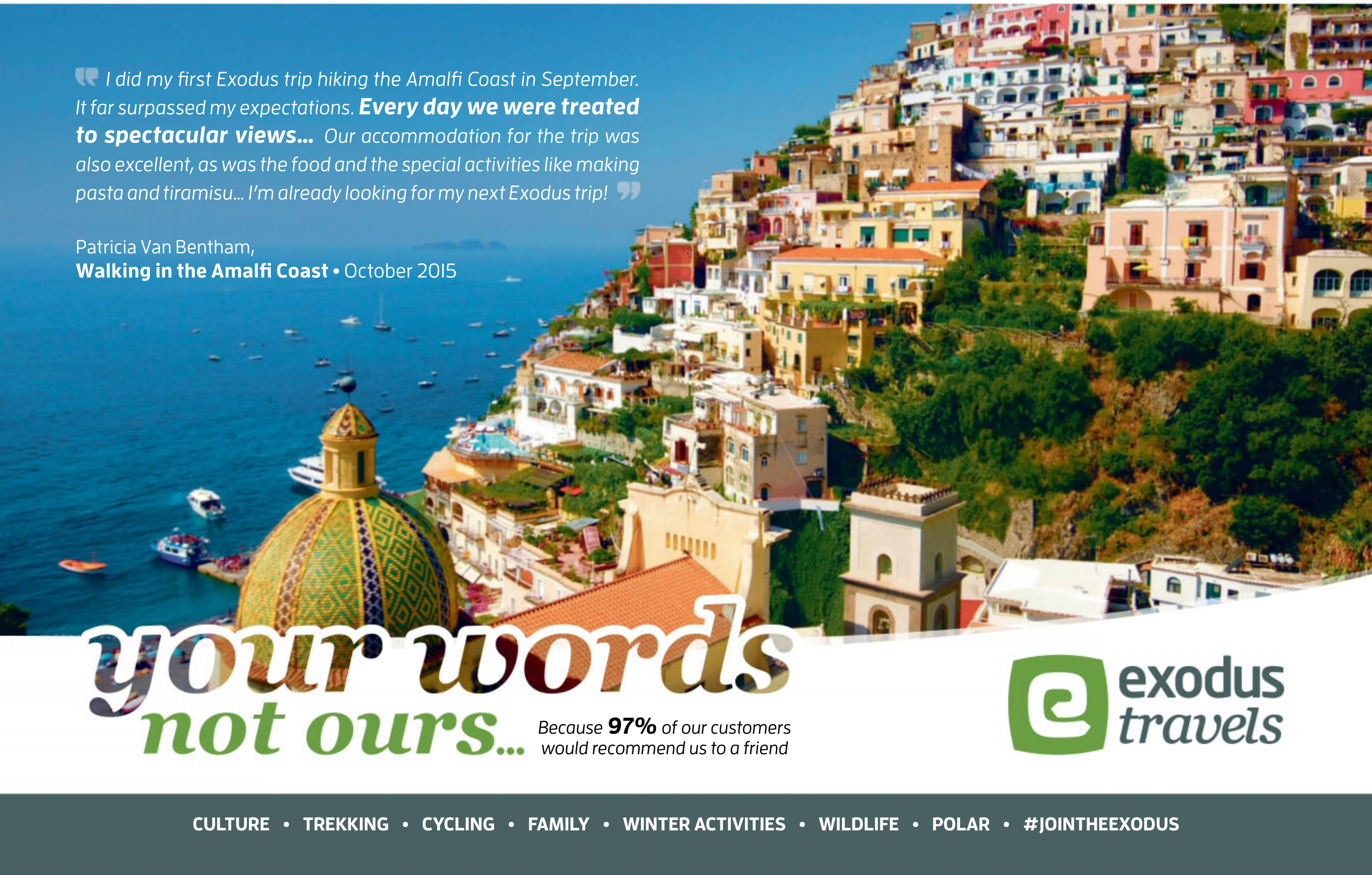

I did my first Exodus trip hiking the Amalfi Coast in September. It far surpassed my expectations. ***Every day we were treated to spectacular views...*** *Our accommodation for the trip was also excellent, as was the food and the special activities like making pasta and tiramisu... I'm already looking for my next Exodus trip!*

Patricia Van Bentham,
Walking in the Amalfi Coast • October 2015

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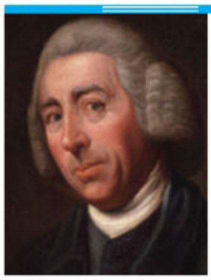


Capability Brown gardens

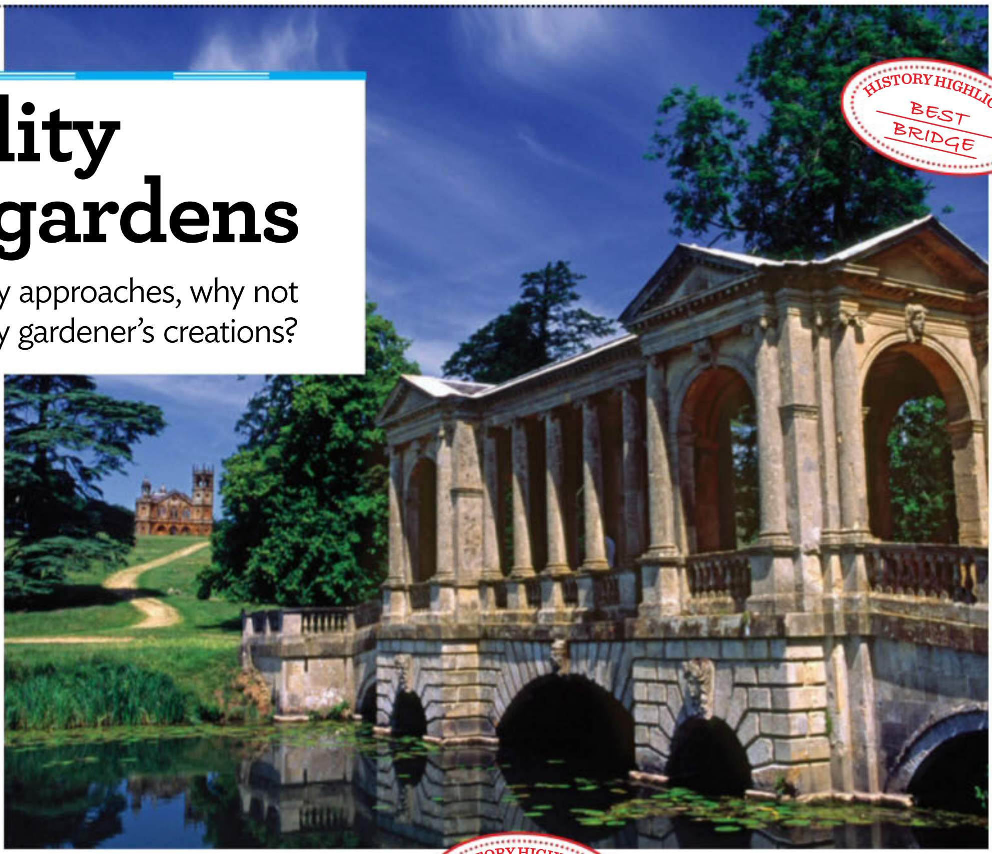
As his 300th birthday approaches, why not explore the legendary gardener's creations?

Stowe

After whetting your appetite with the exhibitions celebrating the works of Capability Brown in his classical Temple of Concord and Victory, enjoy the breathtaking vistas of the Grecian Valley and deer park, before experiencing the gentle tranquillity of Eleven Acre Lake.

EXPLORER'S ✷ ESSENTIALS

www.nationaltrust.org.uk/stowe
Mon – Sun: 10am – 6pm,
(Parkland open dawn to dusk).
Adult: £11.20 ($16) Child: £5.60 ($8)



HISTORY HIGHLIGHT
BEST BRIDGE

Compton Verney

Compton Verney was recently awarded a £2.5 million Heritage Lottery Fund grant to conserve and celebrate Brown's work on the Warwickshire Estate, including a rare Brown-designed chapel. Take a garden tour, learn about restoration work on the chapel and stroll around 48 hectares of landscaped parkland.

✷ **www.comptonverney.org.uk**
Tues – Sun (Closed Mon except Bank Holidays): 10.30am – 5pm.
Adult: £9.50 ($14) Child: £5.60 ($8)

Blenheim Palace

Brown's landscaping of Blenheim Palace took more than a decade and transformed the parkland while managing to remain sympathetic to its natural features. Explore 800 hectares of grounds and make sure not to miss the 12th-century woodland Brown preserved, one of the oldest in Europe.

✷ **www.blenheimpalace.com**
Mon – Sun: 10.30am – 5.30pm (Palace and pleasure gardens), 9am – 6pm (Park)
Adult: £14.90 ($22) Child: £6.90 ($10)

HISTORY HIGHLIGHT
BEST LAKE

Harewood House

Harewood's breathtaking 13-hectare serpentine lake was designed by Brown as the centrepiece of his magnificent parkland restoration. His gentle, pastoral landscaping remains unchanged and offers visitors a relaxing and idyllic experience whether exploring the lakeside woodland or Himalayan Garden.

✷ **harewood.org**
Mon – Sun: 10am – 6pm
Adult: £12.50 ($18) Child: £7.50 ($11)

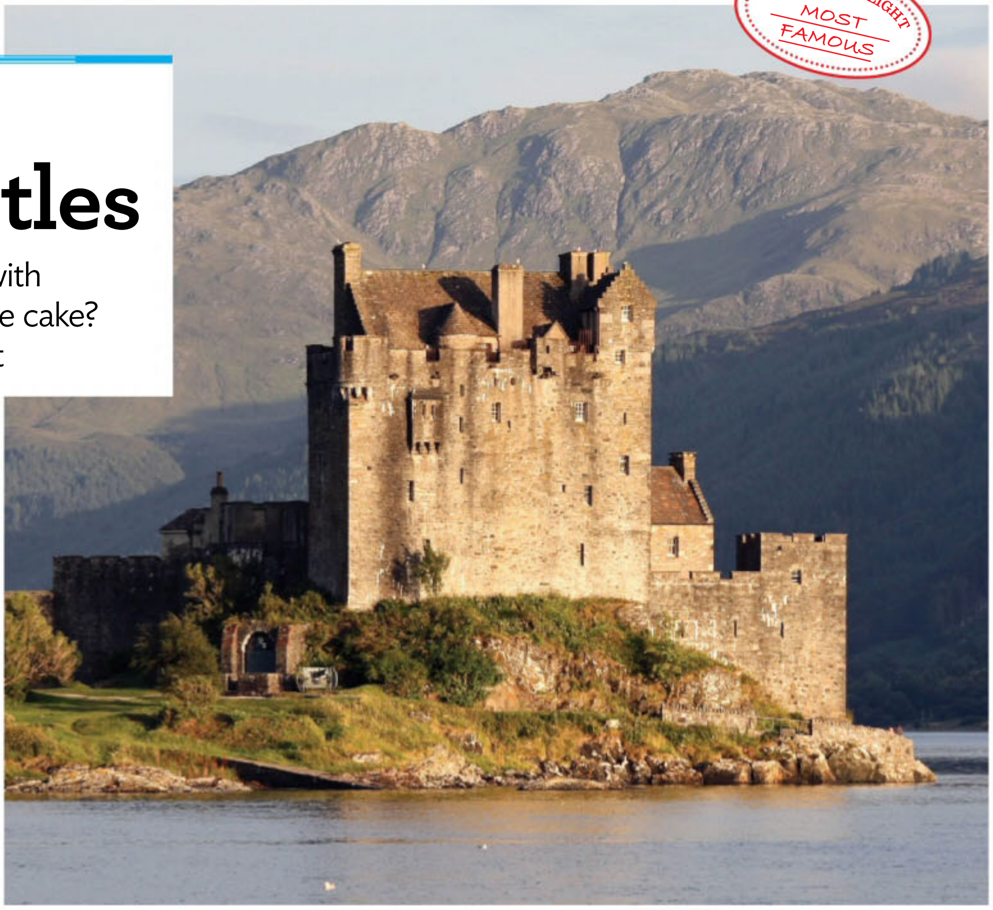
Burghley House

Although the distant town of Stamford can be glimpsed from Burghley's deer park, from here it seems that it could be in another world. The serene landscape offers hectares of rolling parkland as well as a dramatic lake, the culmination of Brown's more than 25 years of work on the grounds there.

✷ **www.burghley.co.uk**
Mon – Sun: 11am – 5pm (Parkland open dawn to dusk)
Adult: £8.50 ($12) Child: £5.50 ($8)

Must-see Highland castles

The highlands of Scotland are filled with breathtaking scenery. The icing on the cake? A plethora of excellent castles to visit



HISTORY HIGHLIGHT
MOST FAMOUS

Eilean Donan Castle

This 13th-century fortification cuts an iconic Scottish image. Destroyed during the Jacobite rebellions, restoration work was carried out at the turn of the 20th century, and it has been featured in many films such as *Highlander* and *The Wicker Man*.

EXPLORER'S ✴ ESSENTIALS

www.eileandonancastle.com
Mon – Sun: 10am – 6pm
(Seasonal times may apply)
Adult: £7 ($10), under-5s free.

HISTORY HIGHLIGHT
BEST FOR THEATRE FANS

Cawdor Castle

The historic home of the Thane of Cawdor and famed for its literary connections (including to Shakespeare's *Macbeth*), this romantic 14th-century castle is sure to delight. Importantly, the castle does not get overshadowed by its connection to the Bard, and actually possesses an intriguing history of its own.

✳ **www.cawdorcastle.com**
25 April – 2 October: 10am – 5.30pm
Adult: £10.70, ($16) Child: £6.70 ($10)

Urquhart Castle

Once one of the largest castles in Scotland, Urquhart changed hands between England and Scotland during the Wars of Independence. Situated on the banks of Loch Ness, these impressive remains are packed with an outstanding array of history as well as important historical artefacts.

✳ **www.historic-scotland.gov.uk**
Mon – Sun: 9.30am – 6pm
(Seasonal times may apply)
Adult: £8.50 ($12), Child: £5.10 ($7)

Castle Sinclair Girnigoe

Located on the northern tip of Scotland, this castle, built by Clan Sinclair sometime in the 15th century, commands an awesome view over the coast and North Sea. This exquisite ruin is also the only castle in Scotland to be listed by the World Monuments Fund.

✳ **www.castlesinclairgirnigoe.org**
Open all year
Free entry
Not suitable for pushchairs or wheelchairs

HISTORY HIGHLIGHT
BEST FORT

Fort George

A strong contender for the mightiest artillery fort in all of Europe, Fort George was built after the final Jacobite rebellion in 1746. Its building and defences are still in excellent condition today and these, coupled with its vast arms collection, truly make it a Highland must-see for military enthusiasts.

✳ **www.historic-scotland.gov.uk**
Mon – Sun: 9.30am – 5.30pm (summer),
10am - 4pm (winter)
Adult: £8.50 ($12), Child: £5.10 ($7)

The best WWII Museums in France

France is home to dozens of museums offering visitors a chance to learn more about its pivotal involvement in World War II. Here are just a few

MUSEE DU DEBARQUEMENT
6 JUIN 1944 D DAY

EXPLORER'S ESSENTIALS

www.arromanches-museum.com
Mon – Sun: 9am – 6pm (Seasonal times may apply)
Adult: €7.90 (£6/$9) Child: €5.80 (£5/$7)

Musée du Débarquement

The first museum built to commemorate the Normandy campaign and D-Day landings, Musée du Débarquement overlooks the remains of a Mulberry harbour and tells the story of Normandy through film, an interactive diorama and extensive original collections.

HISTORY HIGHLIGHT
BEST FOR TANK LOVERS

Musée des Blindés

This Loire Valley landmark contains one of the world's largest collections of tanks, with more than 800 vehicles, 200 of which are in working order and includes the only working German Tiger II. Visitors are encouraged to be hands-on with the exhibits so this is a must-see for tank enthusiasts.

www.museedesblindes.fr/en
Mon – Sun: 10am – 6pm (Seasonal times may apply)
Adult: €8 (£6/$9) Child: €5 (£4/$6)

Blockhaus d'Eperlecques

Situated in tranquil woodland, the bunker is the biggest in northern France and is now open to the public. During a 90-minute visit, you can see the launchpad of the German V1 and V2 rockets and the scars of devastating Tallboy bombing raids on this vital target.

www.leblockhaus.com/en
Mon – Sun: 10am – 6pm (Closed November-February)
Adult: €10 (£8/$11) Child: €5.50 (£4/$6)

La Coupole

Now a World War II museum and stunning planetarium, La Coupole is located in an enormous underground bunker that was built in 1943. Intended as the launch site for the V2 rocket, La Coupole now remembers the lives lost in its construction, while also looking to the future.

www.lacoupole-france.co.uk
Mon – Sun: 10am – 6pm
(Seasonal times may apply.)
Adult: €10 (£8/$11) Child: €7 (£6/$8)

HISTORY HIGHLIGHT
BEST ARTEFACTS

The Overlord Museum

The Overlord Museum was opened in 2013 to showcase the collection of Michel Leloup, who dedicated his life to preserving tens of thousands of artefacts from the Normandy battlefields. From uniforms to vehicles and documents, this is a unique, must-see collection.

www.overlordmuseum.com
Mon – Sun: 10am – 6pm (Closed January; seasonal times may apply.)
Adult: €7.50 (£6/$9) Child: €5 (£4/$6)

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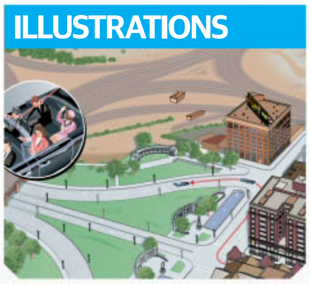

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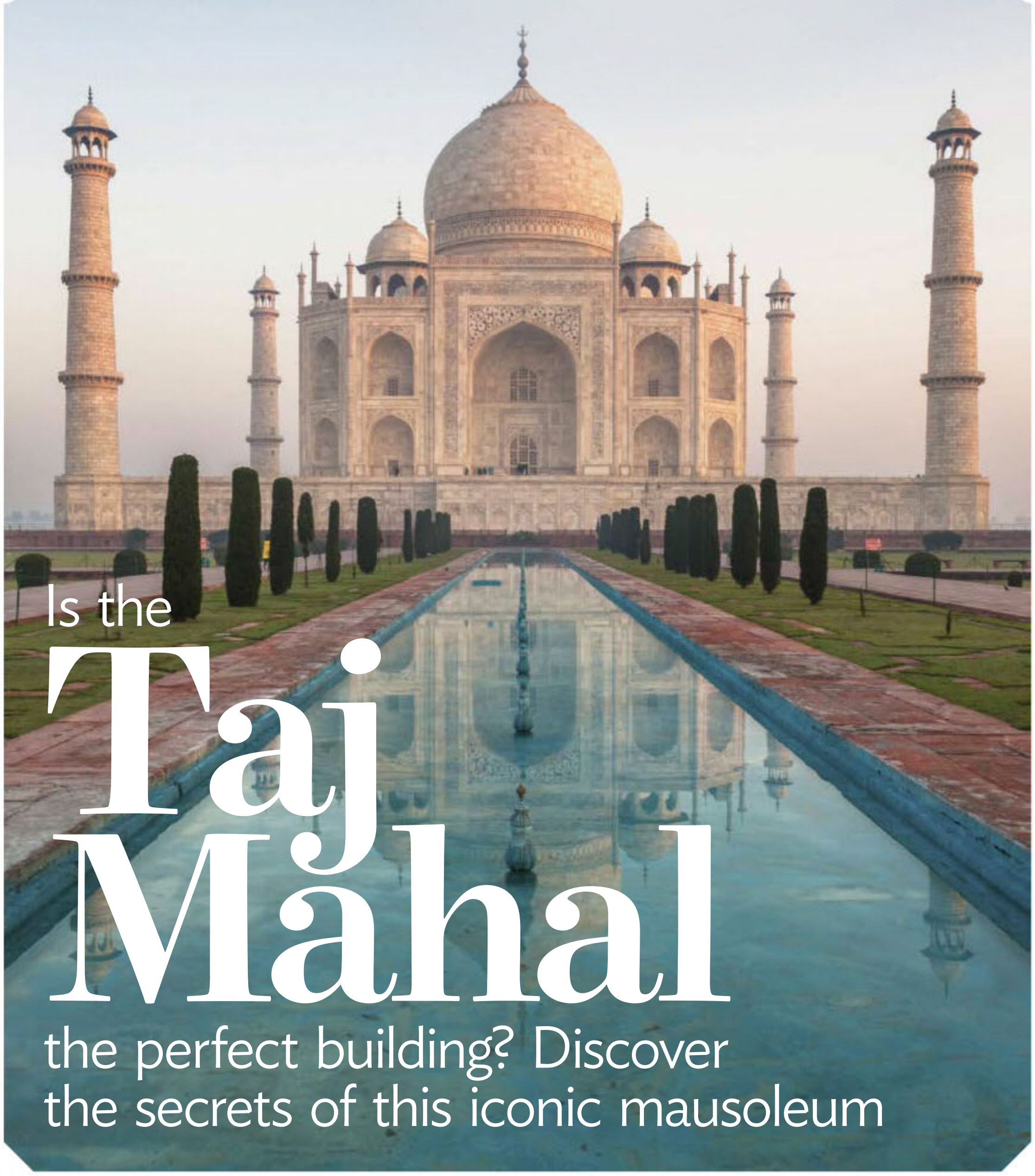

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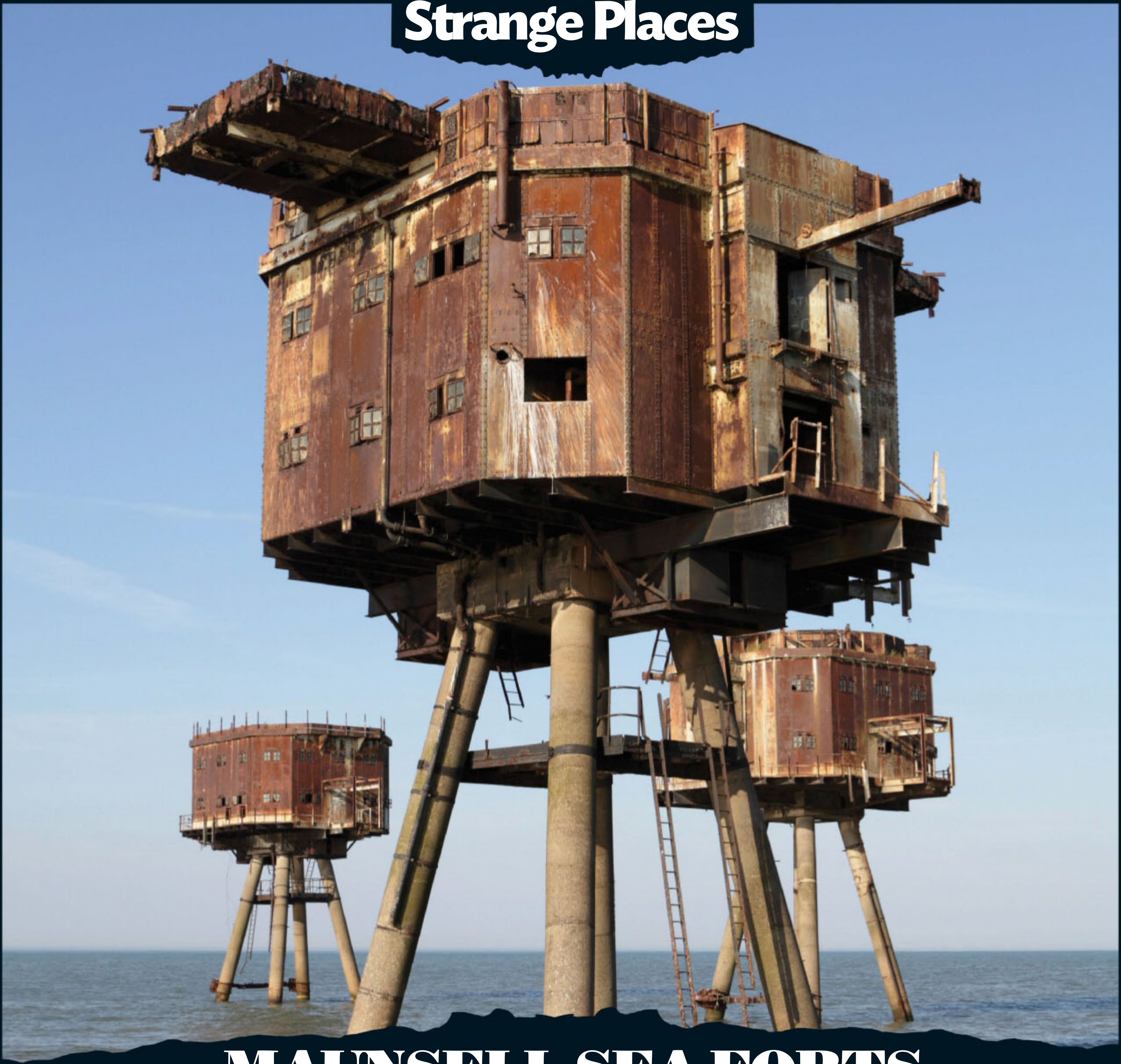

MAUNSELL SEA FORTS

Looming out of the cold spray of the Thames Estuary like the armoured invaders of HG Wells's *The War of the Worlds*, these patina-caked towers were built in 1942 as anti-aircraft platforms, to defend the Thames from German bombers and V2 rockets.

Designed by civil engineer Guy Maunsell, each tower was originally connected by a walkway to make a single complex and sunk to the seabed on a concrete base. Far from being as flimsy as the spindly legs first appear, each one is a mesh tube filled with reinforced concrete. Their design has directly inspired the construction of modern oil rigs.

Once bristling with artillery and searchlights, these relics are now largely inaccessible, serving as navigation aids for shipping, while marine life thrives in the habitat formed by their foundations.

Of the three forts that once guarded England's shores, only two survive: Red Sands and Shivering Sands, with seven and six towers each. The third, Nore, was dismantled after being hit by a ship in the 1950s and judged to be a menace to traffic. Its concrete 'feet' were towed ashore and dumped where they can be seen on the beach at Cliffe, Kent in low tide.

Trips inside the towers are rare due to their deteriorating condition, but Red Sands is the target of an ongoing conservation project and opportunities may arise to visit or volunteer through **www.project-redsand.com**. Boat trips to view the forts also depart from various ports in Kent. Visit **www.maunsellseaforts.com** to learn more.

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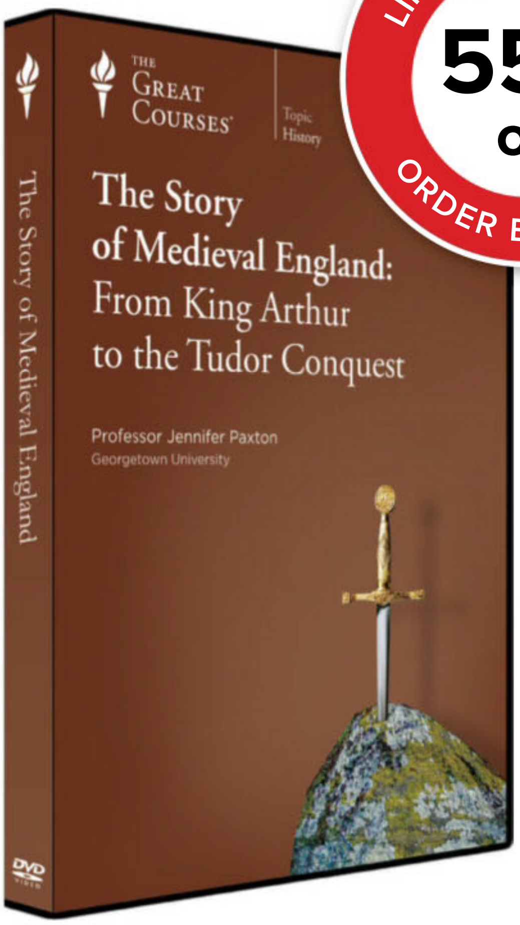
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